



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

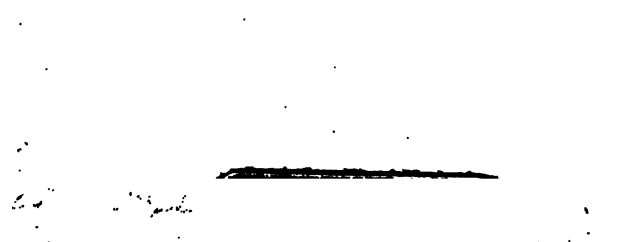
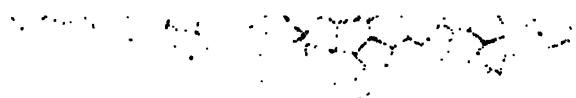


HARTLAND FOREST

AND

ROSETEAGUE.

MRS. BRAY.



George Walker
1897

E. M. COLLEGE

1. *What is the main purpose of the study?*

2. *What are the research objectives?*

3. *What is the research methodology?*

H M Coldman

HARTLAND FOREST

AND

ROSETEAGUE.

Mrs. Bray's Novels and Romances.

HISTORICAL ROMANCES.

THE WHITE HOODS. DE FOIX.		THE PROTESTANT. THE TALBA.
------------------------------	--	-------------------------------

ROMANCES OF THE WEST.

FITZ OF FITZ FORD. WARLEIGH.		TRELAWNY OF TRE- LAWNE.
COURTENAY OF WAL- REDDON.		HENRY DE POMEROY. HARTLAND FOREST, AND ROSETEAGUE.

MISCELLANEOUS TALES.

TRIALS OF THE HEART.
A FATHER'S CURSE, AND A DAUGHTER'S
SACRIFICE.





H. W. B. 1874

Frontispiece.

Page 62.

HARTLAND FOREST

AND

ROSETEAGUE.

BY

MRS. BRAY.

NEW AND REVISED EDITION.

LONDON: CHAPMAN AND HALL,
LIMITED,
1884.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY GILBERT AND RIVINGTON, LIMITED,
ST. JOHN'S SQUARE.

HARTLAND FOREST.

CHAPTER I.

"He that with injury is grieved,
And goes to law to be relieved,
Is sillier than a sottish chouse,
Who, when a thief has robb'd his house,
Applies himself to cunning men,
To help him to his goods again."

BUTLER'S *Hudibras*.

OLD SIR THOMAS FAIRLAND, of Northleigh Hall, near Exeter, in the county of Devon, and his neighbour, both in land and residence, old Squire Goldburn, of Southmead House, disputed, quarrelled, and went to law about a hedge, a gate, and a cart-way between their estates, which, unhappily for themselves, and most happily for the gentlemen of the profession, attorneys, solicitors, and barristers, were contiguous. The contact, like many a one of a much higher nature, was too close for peace; and after more than seven years' disputation, removals from sessions to sessions and court to court, after contesting every point and splitting every straw of the contest with the most delicate tact of quibble, shift, and quirk, after some hundreds spent on both sides, with, at the end of the time, just as near an approach to the termination of the cause as there was at the beginning, the principals began to weary of that most tedious of all wars—a war of the gown instead of the sword.

Whilst both were thus heartily sick of John Doe and Richard Roe and all the costly fictions of the law, fortune did them a good turn; she sent them a journey to London together in the same rumbling vehicle, at the time of which we write

(A.D. 1720) one of the earliest and oldest stage-coaches in England. It was nothing less than one of a celebrated set which were thus described and advertised in *The Evening Post* of the period :—

“London, Bath, and Bristol stage-coaches performed by Thomas Baldwin, citizen and cooper of London, living now at the Crown Inn, at Slough, near Windsor, being the Bowling Green House ; goes from the Saracen’s Head in Friday Street, and from the One Bell Inn behind the New Church near the Maypole in the Strand, and Mr. John Tillies in Swan Yard at the Coach and Horses over against Somerset House, for the White Hart Inn near the Town’s End in Bristol, and at the White Hart Inn near the King’s Bath in Bath, for London ; and for the better accommodation and conveniency for travellers to and from the places above said, on Monday the 28th instant April 1720, begins FLYING from the above-said places every Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday during the FLYING SEASON, which is a performance never before done. Likewise a THREE DAYS’ COACH. Note the same coachman goes through to Bath and from Bath to London.”¹

The above-named worthies set off together on the same day, and in the same coach, which, notwithstanding all its boasted rapidity, did not get on quite so fast as the speed of a modern railway. Sir Thomas Fairland and old Squire Goldburn, after arranging their legs with much courtesy, so as to sit without inconvenience opposite to each other, somehow or other conceived the bright idea that, as neither of them needed their attorney to settle their amicable adjustment of a footing in the stage-coach, even so might they manage to settle their other difficulty without further interference on the part of the gentlemen of the long robe and still longer bills,

Sir Thomas, who was a bit of a humorist, at least so considered at the Bowling Green Club, said something to that effect to his neighbour Goldburn. As the latter worthy answered, with an encouraging allusion to the old fable (and thus used by him it was a gracious simile), that whilst two dogs were quarrelling for a bone, a mongrel intruder often managed to step in and run away with it, their friendly intercourse improved more rapidly than did the pace of the flying coach ; and that day, when they dined together on the road (ample time was then given for such

¹ Copied from the original advertisement.

a refection to the traveller), over a social bowl of punch they positively once and for ever made up the dispute. The following were the terms of agreement, viz., that as Sir Thomas Fairland had an only child, a son, and Squire Goldburn an only child, a daughter, these children should intermarry, and thus, by a union of interests, make one hereafter of their estates, and so settle all difficulties.

The thing was decided; they shook hands upon it over an extra bowl of punch; and old Mr. Goldburn undertook to have his daughter Sarah home from school, and Sir Thomas Fairland promised to write forthwith to his son John, who was at Oxford, to bid him come down into the country with all speed. The lawyers were to be relieved of their present labours and to have a pleasanter job for all parties given them, though a far less profitable one for themselves, in drawing the marriage articles for a speedy wedding. Sir Thomas fulfilled his promise in the following epistle, which for the benefit of such of our readers as may be desirous to inspect documents of this description, we give just as it came into our own hands.

"To Mr. John Fairland, Batchelor of Arts, Exon College Oxford.

"May 31st, 1720.

"SON JOHN,—I have yours of the 25th instant, which is soe hastily wrote, soe full of blots and blurrs, that I could hardly read it. Had I not formerly received from you some of the same complexion, I should have believed it writ by a school boy rather than by a University scholar and a Batchelor of Arts; and that not to a father, but to the most ignorant of inferiors. The reasun of my not answering your former letter and sending you a bill, is your neglecting to give me a full and partikler account how you have disposed of the Thirty-seven pounds three shillings and sixpence which I have supplied you with since the 10th day of February last, which methinks you should have thought yourself obliged for to do in point both of duty and interest. Thirty-seven pounds three shillings and sixpence out of my pocket in four months' time I find to be a very greatesum of money, and what I am a long time a getting together; and lastly, it is but reasunable I should know how it has been applied. Not only you, but many other things—such as making the new cart roade, my law suits, and the new pound at Goose Green—have been very expensive, and tenants don't pay

and farms don't lett as they yused to do ; and oats and Hay are . rose high since Christmas ; and my law bills have come in heavy. But I have hit upon a way to put a stop to them. For Squire Goldburn and I, happening to travil together in the Flying Coach, settled the matter between us, which will be a greate saveing of time and money to both parties—pitty we didn't think of it before : but better late than never is an old and a true saying. And I must say Squire Goldburn behaved neighbourly and like a man of sense, who saw his own interest when clearly put before him. Soe we agreed to end law and make a match of it, and by uniting the estates hereafter in proper settlements to put an end to all difficulty about the subject of our disputes.

"I am to pull down the hedge, he consents to give up the gate, and the old cart way is to be common between us both ; I to be allowed the expence incurred in cutting the new one.

"You must come home as soon as you can on receipt of this to be married. Noland is drawing the settlements. You may order wedden clothes and new liveries, if you like it, in London ; for I've my reasons for not wishing to be shabby on the occasion. Don't forget to jog Simmon's memory about my South Sea stock. Tell Jenkins, if you see him (and he goes up with cattle to Smithfield Fair at this time every year), to send me down the sides of Hampshire bacon as yusual.

"You may buy the wedden ring at Wergman's in St. James's Street, and any jim crack you may think proper on the occasion for Miss, not to exceed five pounds for the cost of the same. Say when you'll come. I do herewith inclose a bill for fifty pounds, though I was angry with you, as just cause was, when I begunn this letter. Soe no more at present from your father,

"THOS. FAIRLAND.

"Northleigh Hall, ended this June 1st, 1720."

The above elegant and fatherly epistle was duly sealed and sent ; and about three weeks after, by the then weekly post Sir Thomas received the following affectionate and dutiful reply from his son :—

"*To Sir Thomas Fairland, Bart., &c., these.*

"Exeter College, Oxon.

"DEAR FATHER,—Many thanks for the Bill ; it would, however, have been more worth saying thank you for, if another of the

same amount had come along with it. I have no great fancy for marrying; but I'll do it to oblige you. I never saw old Goldburn's daughter. Hope she's pretty and has some spirit in her. Can she dance, sit a horse well, and leap a gate? But never mind that; if she has money, the thing will do very well. That's what we want in the matter. How black the lawyers will look when they find that you and old Goldburn have made it up. I should like to have enjoyed the fun of telling them the news; that would have been a nut worth cracking. I'll do all in London as you wish, and will only stay there to see the new play at Lincoln's Inn Fields—*The City Wife*—and the great Bear bait about to take place in Tothill Fields, and will then come down and be married as soon as you like.

“Dear Father,

“Your dutiful son,

“JOHN FAIRLAND.”

We thought it right to give our readers copies of the above epistles, as they are highly characteristic of both father and son. All was prepared as directed, and in the month of July following, on one fine morning early, there was a great stir and bustle at Southmead House. Tables groaned with the preparations for a grand dinner; friends were arriving from far and near; tenants were collecting, and the poor were astir; they were to have a feast. All the fiddles the country round could produce were engaged for a ball in the evening; and there were to be bride-cakes, and scrambling for the wedding-ring in a pail of water, and throwing the stocking, and all the other old English customs on the marriage of Miss Sarah Goldburn with Mr. John Fairland, as agreed upon between their worthy fathers.

It was said that the settlements were duly prepared, and were to have been signed ere the parties set out for church. All this was said; but whether truly or falsely we cannot at this distance of time possibly determine. Certain it is that one settlement took place on that day which, though final, was little expected, and least of all by the party most concerned in it. This arose from the sudden presence of a guest by no means welcome, who stepped in uninvited and without more ceremony turned the house of intended joy into one of mourning; exactly reversing what Hamlet says to Horatio, when he declares that the baked meats of his father's funeral did coldly furnish forth his mother's marriage board. For here the good cheer, roast or

baked, prepared for the marriage-feast, did indeed serve for a funeral one, and for that of no less a person than he at whose cost it had been so amply prepared. To drop all figure, the fact was this : old Mr. Goldburn was found dead in his bed on the very morning he had intended to give away his only daughter in the proposed union with the son of Sir Thomas Fairland.

It is almost unnecessary to say that the wedding could not take place ; and during the time appropriated for that mourning which natural affection, decency, and the settlement of the old gentlemen's affairs required, some very strange and, as they eventually turned out, very unfortunate circumstances occurred.

Mr. Goldburn had made his will some years before he had any thoughts of marrying his daughter, and in it, with the exception of a handsome life-annuity to his wife, left his only child Sarah sole heiress to all his property, real and personal, and committed her to the hands of a very worthy upright man, Mr. Sheriff (a well-known lawyer in the west of England), as her guardian.

Mr. Sheriff found Mr. Goldburn's affairs not quite so easily settled as he had at first imagined they would be. There were no incumbrances, but time was required to put many matters to rights ; and circumstances had lately come to his knowledge, in the course of his legal practice, which had given him a very complete insight into the concerns of Sir Thomas Fairland. He was convinced that the old baronet's affairs were in a bad plight ; that he had completely deceived the late Squire Goldburn ; and that his son, who passed with the world for being only wild and thoughtless, was, in fact, very cunning, and a party concerned in the knavish designs of the father. In short, that both father and son had formed a plot to possess themselves, as far as they could do so, of Miss Goldburn's fortune, in order to clear their own embarrassed estates.

Like an honest man and a faithful guardian, Mr. Sheriff did all he could to delay the marriage (to break it off was, of course, out of his power) till he could effect the following object—namely, to put the deceased Mr. Goldburn's affairs in such a state as that the marriage articles should secure the immense fortune of Miss Sarah Goldburn, both in land and money, to her and to her children, or, failing issue, to the Goldburn family hereafter ; giving the husband (whose motives in seeking her hand were those of the most sordid nature) only a life-

interest in her property. To effect these most meritorious objects Mr. Sheriff set hard to work; but in the interval some very annoying circumstances occurred.

Unhappily the widow of old Mr. Goldburn and mother of Sarah happened to be of the house of Fairland. In fact, she had been a Miss Fairland, and was a younger sister, on the father's side, of Sir Thomas. She, like himself, was born at Northleigh Hall; and all her thoughts, feelings, and family pride were centred in the grandeur of the residence and in the name of Fairland. Her husband, the late Mr. Goldburn, though of very respectable and wealthy parentage, had nevertheless sprung from trade and commerce; hence she held him and his connections very cheap, and on all occasions was ready to sacrifice his interests to those of her own more aristocratic family. She was not without kindness of heart and good intentions; but she was a very weak woman—deficient in knowledge of human nature, of strong prejudices, and wholly unsuspecting of the villainy and knavery of half mankind. With such a character to work upon, her half-brother and his son were able to defeat the prudent and upright plans of Mr. Sheriff, and to make her the instrument of injuring her own daughter.

They first persuaded her that the young lady's guardian, being a lawyer, never intended to settle the late Mr. Goldburn's affairs, but, by one delay and another, to keep them in his own hands for his own benefit. Unhappily, they said, by the great power given him by her late husband's will, he could very easily do so, to the serious prejudice or utter destruction of the young lady's fortune. Almost any steps, they argued, were therefore warrantable to counteract him in such designs. In fine, so artfully did they prevail with the weak and credulous mother, that she actually joined with young Fairland in persuading her daughter to marry him without her guardian's consent—and this she did only a few days after she came of age!

This act of folly done (before Mr. Sheriff could interfere in any way to protect the cruelly deceived young woman, who thus married without any marriage articles), on the very day after the ceremony Sarah had a deed laid before her which she was directed to sign, being told by her husband and his father it was absolutely necessary, in order to enable them to take immediate steps in her behalf, and rescue her property from the rapacious hands of her guardian. In an evil hour poor Sarah complied. THE DEED was one of surrender or gift of all her

real estates to the husband she had just wedded ; and, as no personal property was secured to her, all the rest became likewise his own in right of his marriage.

Thus, then, the heiress of old Mr. Goldburn, who was the mistress of thousands on the morning she gave her hand at the altar, before the close of the following day became completely dependent on an unprincipled, extravagant, selfish husband, who had used the advantages of a remarkably handsome person and a specious manner to win himself into her favour, and repaid the unlimited confidence this amiable young creature had been led to repose in him by an act of the most ungrateful, deliberate villainy to her and to her offspring yet unborn. Her mother lived deeply to repent the folly into which she had been drawn, and to know, too late, the honour, probity, and prudence of her daughter's mistrusted and ill-used guardian.

Having narrated these circumstances at large, we shall pass in silence much that is painful, and briefly recount the events of several ensuing years. The marriage so iniquitously brought about proved an unhappy one to both parties. The husband was dissatisfied and tyrannical, for he plainly saw that he did not long retain a place in the affections of his wife. That wife was at once suffering and patient. Three daughters, Nancy, Diana, and Patty, were the fruit of the marriage. Their father hated them all, and wished for a son ; yet from no motive of tenderness, only because a man of an old family with a good estate ought to have a son ; it was usual, a thing looked for, and it ought to be.

The least remarkable events, and, indeed, the least painful, because they were not contrary to nature, that we have to record during this period, are the deaths of the mother of the unhappy wife and of old Sir Thomas Fairland. After a long and very suffering illness, the latter at last died suddenly, even whilst giving instructions to his son how to get the highest interest from a widow surrounded with a numerous offspring, whose necessities had driven her to have recourse to the ruinous system of mortgaging, in order to meet some pressing claims on account of her late husband's debts.

His son dutifully attended his death-bed, and reverently observed his father's instructions, particularly those about the mortgage. He saw the old gentleman breathe his last ; and his man-servant, Tom Wakeum, who stood behind him, said very civilly, as he turned away from the corpse, " Sir, you are now

Sir John Fairland; but, nevertheless, I'm sorry for you, sir, that old master is gone. And, dear me! to think that he should die just before Lady-day! He was always asking, in his illness, how soon it would come; thinking, no doubt, of the rents and the tenants. I'm sorry for you, sir, that your father is gone."

"And yet, Tom," said the new baronet with solemn composure, "you know the saying: It is better to have a fat sorrow than a lean one. All the Fairland property comes clear now since my marriage. Send for Shroud, the undertaker, and let every possible respect be paid to my father's memory in the funeral. Bury in lead, Tom; hearse, horses, escutcheons, and black plumes."

So saying, the son closed the bed-curtains on the dead, and retired to his deceased father's closet. What were his contemplations there on the late scene nobody knew. But the nurse, who passed the door, hearing a slight noise within the room, and being very curious, listened at the keyhole, and said that she heard distinctly a rumpling, like the turning over of parchments and papers.

A few days after a pompous funeral train bore the mortal remains of old Sir Thomas Fairland to their last resting-place in the parish church. A still more pompous epitaph, engraved on an enormous slab of white marble, standing more than fifteen feet high, on the walls of the church, with a full cheeked cherub at each corner, blowing a trumpet, recorded his birth, his ancient family, and all his grand connections; his having served twice in Parliament and once as sheriff of the county; his many virtues, real and imaginary, were not forgotten; his strict integrity was set forth; and, as a last item of the account, the tablet stated he had been a liberal benefactor to the poor. This was a mistake; it should have said, to the lawyers.

We have before stated that Sarah (whom we must henceforth call Lady Fairland) was not happy in her married life. As time glided on, experience taught her to reflect justly on the past. She was scarcely surprised at the melancholy result of the connection she had formed in so rash and imprudent a manner. Too late did she find that, in seeking to win her youthful heart, Sir John Fairland had been more studious to please than to benefit her; and that in respect to advantage he had looked only to his own. But, whatever may have been her disappoint-

ment, she had of late years kept it much within her own bosom. Well did she know that in a married life there is little dignity in complaint, and that in censuring a husband a woman in some measure reflects upon herself. She was also aware that none but the great events of life are those which arrest the eye of the world. So long as a wife keeps her station, without experiencing any violent ill-treatment or glaring deprivation of her rights, those feelings of tenderness, wounded by the cold neglect, the slights, or the daily unkindness of a husband in minor things, that render her most unhappy, meet with no sympathy from others. The common order of men and women are wholly devoid of those finer feelings which constitute the principal source of happiness or misery with the delicate and susceptible in mind. What, therefore, is injury, insult, and even agony to the latter, would be little understood by the former, or, if known, would be treated by them only as themes for laughter and contempt.

Our readers will not be surprised to learn that on the death of her mother (which occurred within six weeks after that of her father-in-law) Lady Fairland found herself ill, low-spirited, lonely, and incapable of taking the active part she could have wished in the care of her family and children. A very poor but beloved cousin (for whom she had always intended to provide had she retained power over her own fortune), who lived with her some years as a companion, a friend, and a sister, had lately married a young curate, and consequently left her. The newly-made baronet was always out, either hunting, shooting, or feasting with his boisterous and not very reputable associates, and some said that he was often found in worse company; and as he had either quarrelled with or given offence to all his most respectable neighbours of his own rank and standing, very little company resorted to the house. To assist her in her family cares, and somewhat to relieve her loneliness, Lady Fairland sought for what was then far more common for married ladies to seek than it is at the present time—a female companion.

One was soon found, a gentlewoman about twenty-one years old, well-looking, of more information than such persons generally possess, insinuating in her address, a shrewd observer, with a fluent and plausible tongue, not at all scrupulous in any matter where her own interests were concerned, and, as it too soon proved, profoundly artful. Sir John Fairland could not have had a worse companion for his wife than Miss Ellen Gil-

bard ; such was her name. Lady Fairland, of an open, kind, and unsuspecting nature, was but too easy a prey for artifice or cunning ; whilst for Sir John the companion was a far more dangerous associate, since he had none of the armour of proof that high principle becomes to a man in the familiar society of a woman who has the power to please and the will to corrupt.

Her first care was to gain a footing with Lady Fairland ; and by being active, useful, and much disposed to save her all trouble or exertion (an indolent temper was her ladyship's principal, if not only, fault), she soon found herself in a position not to be dismissed without great inconvenience to Lady Fairland, who could not do without her. This object gained ("fast seated in her saddle," as Tom Wakeum used to say when he talked of Miss Gilbard), she next turned her attention to the baronet, and opened a masked battery upon him without further delay.

What first prompted her to do so we cannot say ; possibly it might arise from the love of intrigue, which is as meat and drink to some persons, necessary to keep them alive ; or possibly her hawk's eye detected that Sir John Fairland was more than indifferent towards his wife, and that Lady Fairland's constitution was gradually giving way under the slow but sure effects of bitter disappointment and secret sorrow. Possibly, if Lady Fairland died, she, Miss Ellen Gilbard, who had perfect confidence in the strength of her own bodily constitution, and no less in that of her woman's wit, might step into her place and herself become Lady Fairland. Who could say it should not be so ? Many no better than she was had married the widowed husbands of the women to whom they had originally been companions ; and as for her person and address !—a look in the glass and a very free and unembarrassed chit-chat which she held with the baronet on the very afternoon of the day these thoughts first engaged her attention, soon satisfied her that she had nothing to fear.

When persons accustomed to plot and intrigue once fix on a point to attack, they never rest till it is carried, more especially where a motive of paramount self-interest leads them on. Even so was it now. Every whim, every little caprice of Sir John was studied by Miss Ellen, in order to accommodate herself to his humour, his ease, his complacency ; whilst her uncommon talent for amusing and furnishing subjects for amusement was a perpetual source of relief to him from what he had hitherto

detested—his own fireside, and the tedium of wet days and unemployed hours in the country. All this Miss Ellen saw, and she played on his feelings to bring them into harmony with her own. She understood the key-note by which they were governed, and never touched them with a discord. The perpetual sunshine of Miss Ellen's temper towards him, with her unwearyed efforts to please, formed, in his prejudiced view, a striking contrast to the manner and the conduct of his unfortunate wife.

Lady Fairland could not conceal her unhappiness, and that she considered herself a most ill-used woman. To her repeated remonstrances that he ought in honour and in justice to make a settlement on her and on her children (knowing in what way he had possessed himself of all her fortune), he would not only turn a deaf ear, but in his hours of ill-humour would often threaten, as he had no son, to leave whatever he possessed to strangers; or else he would cut short her supplications and suddenly quit the room with the most harsh and unmerited reproaches on his lips.

The repetition of these injuries at last so wore her feelings and irritated her wounded spirit, that she became peevish, at times even fretful, in her manner towards Sir John; and being powerless in those great matters in which he refused her all justice, she grew somewhat obdurate in little things, and in the hope to move him, for the sake of her dear girls hereafter, had recourse to the worst of all expedients—teazing him by constant reproach and petty opposition.

Great was the excuse for her conduct, for great had been its provocation; but it was unwise in the extreme. By so acting she laid herself open to the attack of the serpent she had fostered in her bosom; and when she would indignantly have shaken it off, before it inflicted the most deadly wound, she had no longer the power to do so. Not only did Miss Ellen Gilbard refuse to quit Lady Fairland's service, though engaged solely as her companion, but Sir John threatened his wife that if she sent away the only person who made his home pleasurable to him, he would turn her and her children out of doors.

Stung to the very soul by these indignities, in the passionate bitterness of her feelings, Lady Fairland demanded a separation, which Sir John did not object to. Lawyer Noland was ordered to draw up the necessary articles. The day was fixed for their signing, and the departure of the much-injured wife from Hartland Forest. But these are events that require another chapter.

CHAPTER II.

' Ah ! then and there was hurrying to and fro,
 And gathering tears and tremblings of distress,
 And cheeks all pale which but an hour ago
 Blush'd at the praise of their own loveliness.
 And there were sudden partings, such as press
 The life from out young hearts, and choking sighs
 Which ne'er might be repeated ; who could guess
 If evermore should meet those mutual eyes,
 Since upon nights so sweet such awful morn could rise."

BYRON.

ON the day appointed for the signing of the articles of separation a very striking scene was presented in the fine old hall of Northleigh. We would we could give it to the reader as distinctly as it is impressed on our own mind's eye ; but words have less power than the pencil in sketches of such a nature. We will, however, do our best to afford some faint idea of its interest.

The hall, large and gloomy, was of other and far distant days. The vaulted oak roof, the carved finials and corbels, looked dark with age and the smoke of many generations. The narrow arched windows, set with small diamond panes of glass, were so overshadowed by some lofty elms which grew close without that even on the brightest summer day the sun's rays never found their way through them, except here and there in a few luminous spots which played upon and chequered the stone pavement beneath. A huge old chimney (wide enough to hold eight or ten persons within its ample sides when the winter logs blazed merrily on the hearth), with a large ornamental front, having the family arms cut deep into the granite of which it was composed, stood opposite the windows. Several doors opened into the hall, and the largest led from it to the court before the house.

Many a picture hung around ; many a portrait of the Elizabethan and James I. fashion. Though some of these Fairlands were of high note in their day, they were now only remembered by those pale and timeworn records of their features, or by tablets and brasses in the church, which told how sons and daughters of earth, once the inheritors of knightly honours and great posses-

sions, had passed away to sleep with the meanest, till the last dread day of the universal account.

“Sceptre and crown must tumble down,
And in the earth be equal laid
With the poor crooked scythe and spade.”

Here also were seen worthies of the time of Charles I., with steel breastplate, buff, and bandoleer. As of the reign of William and Mary, and Queen Anne, with full-bottomed wigs and high toupée, down to the no less disguised beaux and belles of the *then* present time. The former in gold-laced coats and cut velvet waistcoats, three-cornered hats in their hands, and nose-gays in their button-holes, simpering and smiling *vis-à-vis* to the fair dames in sacks, and hoops, and lappets, with all the grace that numberless little black patches, then called sparks, could add to the natural beauties of their complexions. Some tapestry, though sadly faded and worn, still covered the lower portions of the walls ; and a very large old table, with several oak chairs, stood in the centre of the apartment.

At the head of that table sat a grave-looking man, dressed in a snuff-coloured suit, his buckles large and of silver, and his shoes brushed to the brightness of ebony. He had a brow that denoted thought, features of a grave and fixed—a set character is the better term ; they looked as if nothing could move them from their business-like expression ; as if they belonged to a man with whom all the events and circumstances of life passed as matters of rule and order, subject to set forms and determined laws ; with whom whatever was spontaneous could have no place, and who, by his own consent, would as soon be carried away bodily by a whirlwind or a hurricane as by any possible outbreak of his own passions or feelings.

There he sat, the very model of order, with the inkhorn then generally worn by gentlemen of the law hanging from his button-hole, a pen ready cut and nibbed by his side, and his grandfather's great seal-ring upon the thumb of his right hand. He sat with the open parchments before him, quite prepared for business, only waiting the word.

A very different-looking man leaned with his elbows against the granite slab of the chimney-piece, and his back somewhat turned to the lawyer. He was richly though carelessly dressed in a scarlet coat and waistcoat deeply trimmed with gold lace ; the waistcoat was buttoned in the wrong holes, and the blue stockings hung loose about his ankles. There was a pale and

haggard look in his countenance ; he seemed neither satisfied with the world nor with himself ; his brows were knit, his air disconsolate ; yet his features, though wearing so unhappy an expression, were still handsome. His dark eye often settled on the ground ; he stole a hasty and anxious glance towards one of the doors which opened into the hall from the interior of the house ; he seemed to watch it with intense pain, and shrank and shuddered when it moved. He turned, however, his head abruptly away and looked down again upon the ground, but without altering his position, when, on the opening of the door, three lovely children came into the hall.

The eldest, Nancy, was a very fine-grown girl of nearly nine years old, with dark eyes, a rich brown gipsy complexion, and glowing lips and cheeks. The second girl was altogether different, being of a larger make, a noble air, and, though so young, with something commanding in her step and demeanour ; she might have sat for the portrait of an infant Juno. Her features were perfectly formed, the complexion of excessive fairness, though tinged with the deepest blush of the rose, and her hair was as bright and as rich as gold. She bore the name of a goddess ; but it was Diana.

The third child, Patty, scarcely twenty months old, was still in her nurse's arms. These children, and the maid-servant who conducted them, kept somewhat back in the hall. They looked grave, and were perfectly silent, as if they were brought there for some serious purpose, like going to school, though they could not exactly tell for what. The servant looked afraid ; the only unembarrassed and unconcerned living creature there present was the child in its nurse's arms, who smiled and looked about, and sucked her coral, or put her fingers in her mouth, with the most perfect satisfaction.

A groom was seen without the hall-door, holding a horse richly caparisoned, with a red velvet side-saddle and silver mountings ; his own horse, also, was equipped for starting. Two or three gentlemen were present in the hall ; but they kept together in a small knot, somewhat apart from the table. No one spoke ; not even the entrance of the children caused the utterance of a word.

At length the portentous door again moved ; again did the leaning figure give a hurried glance, and, shuddering as it opened, said in a low, hollow tone, as he turned towards the lawyer, " Noland, she is come."

"Yes, Sir John Fairland, I am come, and shall soon be gone from your presence and from this house for ever," said Lady Fairland, as she entered, and with a slow, decisive, and majestic air walked into the very centre of the hall. All eyes were turned upon her. She was still lovely, though in pensive beauty, and wearing in her countenance that peculiar look, that delicate white, with a scarcely natural tinge of bright red, often giving place to an ashy paleness, which marks the future victims of consumption even before there are any actual symptoms of the disease.

Such was Lady Fairland. She was tall and of a stately carriage; her dress, a riding one of the day, was of the highest fashion: a dark maroon-coloured habit and a white satin waist-coat, both rich with gold lace, the finest Flanders lace cravat, a white beaver hat with a long plume drooping over the shoulder as low as the waist.

On reaching the middle of the hall (no one had presence of mind enough to offer her a chair) she stood quite still; and seeing the sullen silence and the inflexible look and manner which Sir John Fairland maintained towards her, she cast on him a proud and indignant glance, as her bosom seemed to swell, and her attitude to become more firm and rigid from the strength of her irritated feelings. A pleased and gentle note, if we may use the word, like the cry of a nestling at the coming of the parent bird, caught her ear, as it issued from the lips of the infant in the arms of the nurse at the sight of the mother.

Lady Fairland turned to the child. It stretched forth its little arms towards her, as if to invite her embrace. She could resist no longer; all the mother rose at once in her soul; she rushed forward, snatched the child from the servant, strained it to her bosom with a feeling of agony, and burst into a flood of tears, as she said in a tone that pierced every ear and touched every heart, "Oh, my poor babe, my dear children, how can I bear to go away, to part from you?"

The two elder girls, seeing the tears, the passionate sorrow of their mother, and hearing her talk of going away, went up to and clung around her, and weeping bitterly for sympathy, yet not exactly knowing why they wept, asked her what was the matter, and why she talked of going away.

Lady Fairland kissed each with the warmest affection, but made no reply to their fond inquiries, and, once more restoring

the infant to the nurse's arms, wiped the big drops that still coursed each other down her own cheeks, and made a strong effort to check her tears, and to recover her self-possession. She had a firm mind, with all a woman's tenderness of heart, and now, feeling herself equal to the task, prepared with a calm and dignified composure to complete it, and to go through the painful and necessary duty of the day.

She approached the table. Mr. Noland rose mechanically, for, though incapable of being easily moved to anything like sympathy or feeling, he was awed by her presence and deportment: he felt at the moment that a noble spirit, maintaining its native simplicity and its sense of self-respect under the most trying circumstances, carries with it a force stronger than all forms and statutes. The moral law asserted its own rights, and the native majesty of truth acted upon him with an ascendancy which none but the dull in head and the hard in heart could resist.

Noland could not. He offered the pen to Lady Fairland to sign the deed of separation, scarcely knowing what he did—for the husband ought to have first signed it—but as he did so he gave an appealing look at that husband, and pronounced with strong emphasis the words "Sir John Fairland!"—as if, in thus suddenly and emphatically addressing him, he would say, "Can you thus let such a wife leave you and your children for ever?"

Sir John raised his head, like a man awakened out of sleep, scarcely conscious of what he saw or heard; as if still under the influence of some dream that had possessed his mind with images of doubt and terror. He looked first at the lawyer, then at his wife, and with a bitter glance at the children; but he neither moved nor spoke; he was deadly pale.

Lady Fairland for a moment occupied the chair which Noland had vacated, took the pen, signed her name with the firmest hand and the utmost deliberation, and then, not daring to trust herself with another tender adieu to the children, purposely turned from them, as she made some steps in advance towards the hall-door, where the horses were waiting for her without. Still she lingered, moved another step or two, and again paused. Those who closely observed her thought they could detect the outward marks of an inward struggle: a wish to say something more, and yet an embarrassment, a feeling that made her reluctant to speak out; and she hesitated as she at length said

the words, "Before I go"—then stopped—a deep blush overspread her pale cheeks, and rose even to her temples, as she murmured, "It must be spoken ; I will not shrink from the task ;" and turning directly towards her husband, she resumed her natural dignity of manner and deportment and thus addressed him,—

"Sir John Fairland, there is one question which I must ask you before I quit your presence and your roof for ever. I ask it before these gentlemen here assembled to witness our separation. Have you, Sir John, any charge to make against my character since I have been your wife?"

"None, madam," replied Sir John, in a calm and serious tone, and without the slightest hesitation.

"Well, then, sir," she continued, "painful to me as the subject is to mention in this company, yet it is due to my own honour that it should not be concealed. Sir John, I must tell you before all here assembled that I am again likely to become a mother. Do not defame me when I am gone ; this is all I ask of you for myself. Be kind to my children, be a father to our dear girls, when I am far away ; and may God forgive you as fully as I do all your past unkindness to me."

Tears rose in her eyes ; she dashed them indignantly off, as if vexed at her own weakness, waved her hand, and turned to depart. But ere she could reach the door Sir John Fairland sprang forward, rushed between her and it, threw his arms round her neck, burst into an agony of grief that seemed to shake every nerve in his strong and manly frame, as he exclaimed, "Stay, Sarah!—do not go. Let it not be said that a child of mine was born out of his father's house ! Perhaps it may be a boy, and all may yet be well."

Lady Fairland made no answer ; she stood irresolute, neither returning nor yet offering to go forward. The two eldest girls came up to her, took her hands in theirs, and, crying, said, "Don't go away, mamma ; stay with papa and us. Oh ! don't go away !"

The gentlemen present gathered round and ventured, though with some fear, to add their request that Lady Fairland would not leave her family and her home, but stay at the entreaty of her husband and children. Still she lingered irresolute.

Lawyer Noland walked a turn or two about the hall. He did not join the group of sorrowing and entreating friends ; but he paused, took a pinch of snuff, and considered for a minute or

so, as he was wont to do when about to give an opinion on a knotty point in law. He next took off his spectacles, rubbed the glasses, put them in their shagreen silver-mounted case, and proceeded to rub his own eyes as he had done his glasses—they had certainly been moistened by a tear. His next movement was towards the nurse-maid. Without saying a word he took the infant gently from her, and carried it, not at all awkwardly, across the hall, and there, taking Lady Fairland by surprise, offered the child at once to her arms. She could not let it drop on the ground; she accepted the precious charge, as he said, "Madam, no woman can leave her infant when entreated to stay and take care of it; Lady Fairland least of all, for she is the tenderest of mothers."

The methodical attorney, having left the child in such good hands, next walked deliberately towards the table, and with the utmost coolness cancelled the whole proceedings by throwing the articles of separation into the fire that was burning on the silver-headed dogs. "Sir John," he said, addressing the astonished baronet, "Sir John, I shall not make any charge for them. No successful termination of an appeal in any court of law ever gave me so much joy as that which has this day resulted from mine to Lady Fairland. Be a wise and a good husband henceforth, and may God bless you both."

Great indeed was the joy of that day's reconciliation; the children were made happy, the servants had a butt of ale broached to drink health and long life to their master and mistress. Mr. Noland took more punch than he ever took before or after for the same honest purpose; even Sir John was for once in his life happy; and Lady Fairland, though pensive, was greatly touched and softened by the events of the day; whilst Miss Ellen Gilbard observed a decorous and a well-pleased manner. For a little while all went on well, even till the time when Lady Fairland was delivered of a son. The babe was pronounced by the nurses and the gossips to be the finest child that ever was born, and as like his father as one pea to another.

By the desire of his mother Mr. Noland was requested to stand godfather. The boy was named Charles after him and John after his father, and the bells of seven neighbouring parishes rang out their merry peals for the joy of his birth.

CHAPTER III.

"Thrift, thrift, Horatio ! the funeral baked meats
Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables."

SHAKESPEARE.

ALTHOUGH Lady Fairland did well in her confinement, it was the opinion of her old and most skilful medical attendant that she carried in her bosom the seeds of consumption, which in all probability would spring up, and terminate in an early death. Though sickly, she lived, however, much longer than the doctors anticipated, even to see her son attain his eighth year, and to experience a renewal of those unkindnesses on the part of her husband which she now accustomed herself to bear with a patient and resigned spirit. Her love for her children was great, and she desired to live, if it might be God's will to spare her, for their sakes, feeling assured that when she was gone theirs would be a neglected and a melancholy lot.

Had the feelings of Sir John Fairland been less capricious towards his wife, both might have been happy. But as not even right feelings can remain such, unless based on right principles and on that constancy which is not to be shaken by every wind, he soon showed a fluctuating and changeable disposition towards her ; and she too soon saw that in the moment of his awakened fears, when he prevented her leaving him for ever, he had made a false estimate of his own heart, and had mistaken the outbreak of passion for a settled affection.

Yet, though Miss Ellen Gilbard still maintained her station at Northleigh Hall, as the chosen favourite of its master, and was often assuming, negligent, or pert to its mistress, there were times when Sir John, especially if in a good humour, let her see that he had not lost all regard and consideration for the mother of his children ; whilst in his deportment to her as his wife, in the face of the world, he preserved a very decent bearing—and was neither slighting nor disrespectful. In the view of the public, therefore (the public, who generally form their opinion from the surface of things, and who neither pause to examine closely nor to reflect deeply), he passed for a very good husband,

and Lady Fairland for a very happy wife, and Miss Ellen Gilbard for a treasure to the whole family.

Another misery scarcely less hard or trying to bear than the liaison between her husband and her companion arose from his indulgence in an arbitrary violent temper. There are men who obtain a sort of privilege and ascendancy in their vices, of which it is very difficult to say how it is gained, unless by the most selfish indulgence on the one hand, and by the mere habit of submission on the other. Be this as it may, Lady Fairland's life was one of constant care and suffering. But passing in silence those numberless little circumstances and feelings which, as they preponderate for good or evil, make up in the aggregate the happiness or misery of domestic life, we proceed at once to the next prominent event of our story, the last illness of Lady Fairland.

Her dear boy had passed his eighth birthday; he was a beautiful, gifted, and most affectionate child, with an intelligence and feeling far beyond his years. Indeed, so acute was his sensibility that Lady Fairland felt very anxious about his future peace. The lad was most fondly attached to his mother; and though so young, from his natural shrewdness, he could detect that his father was often cross to her, and that Miss Ellen Gilbard was not kind. Lady Fairland daily found herself growing weaker and weaker; and scarcely knowing where to turn for a friend (so completely had her husband and her companion kept away from her all persons they disliked, and surrounded her with their own creatures), in the very despair of her situation she had recourse to one who, in our days, would have been held as of a grade far too inferior to be associated with the wife of a baronet.

But in those days it was different. Adverse circumstances, poverty and lowly station, even when engaged in a very humble way of life, were not considered such impassable barriers to social intercourse as they have become in more recent times. Persons did not then remember to forget their old connections, or endeavour to conceal the existence of a near relative or a once loved and valued friend as a subject of discredit to themselves or their more proud and dignified kindred, because that friend was in trade. Lady Fairland was not only free from this folly, but from the weakness of head and the unsoundness of heart which it is to be feared it too often indicates. She had a relative, a very humble one, whom she tenderly loved and

esteemed. It was to her she now turned in the great anxiety she felt for the future welfare of her children.

We mentioned, in a former chapter, that there was a poor cousin who, in the early years of her marriage, lived as a companion with Lady Fairland, and left her to marry a young curate as poor almost as herself. He died, leaving her, with two infants, destitute of all provision. In the extremity of her distress, the Widow Morton—such was her name—found a patron in a then fashionable dressmaker, who had the business of all the great ladies in the county, and who charitably gave the poor curate's widow, as she was clever in ornamental fancies and embroidery, work enough, well paid, to keep herself and her children from starving. Some time after, on the death of her employer, she succeeded to the business, and by the blessing of God on the exertions of the widow and the fatherless she prospered.

At no period of her own past distresses had Lady Fairland ever forgotten her poor cousin Morton ; and had she been the mistress of own fortune, she would have done something more for her and her babes than employ her to make or ornament her dresses and her children's frocks. But the allowance she received from Sir John was most disproportionate to the fortune she had brought him, and the greater part of that scanty allowance she devoted to deeds of charity in the parish. A devotional spirit, acts of mercy and benevolence, and her care and love for her children were the best, indeed the only consolations she had found in her sad and neglected life.

It was to Mrs. Morton she now turned, and implored her, when she herself should be no more, to keep an eye on these children, and, if ever they needed it, to aid them by her advice, or by any other kindness, and that she would on any anxious emergency interfere in their behalf. She also assured her poor cousin, with the most perfect sincerity, that she had the fullest confidence in her good sense, her integrity, and her fearlessness in upholding a righteous cause.

Mrs. Morton was much affected by Lady Fairland's expressions of esteem and regard, and though, as she candidly told her, from her humble station in life, she could not hope to do much in any attempt to serve the children of such a man as Sir John Fairland, yet she would never forget the request of their dear mother, and if ever an opportunity occurred in which she could be useful it should not be lost. With these assurances she took

an affectionate leave of her suffering friend, and never saw her after.

Lady Fairland sank rapidly under her disorder. When Sir John saw her danger, and that there was no hope, he began to learn the value of the wife he had hitherto so neglected; and, as if his tardy and unavailing affection could arrest the progress of death, he now paid her every possible attention. He could not lengthen her days, but he certainly soothed those which remained to her.

During the last fortnight of her illness she had many interviews with her husband. What passed was never known, though he was often much moved, even to tears, on quitting her apartment. Mrs. Morton, however, and even the children themselves, well knew the feelings of Lady Fairland; and there cannot be a doubt that she had recommended them in the most earnest manner to the care of their father. Probably she had obtained a promise that he would so order his affairs as, in case of his death, not only to provide for his children, but to leave them under the charge of proper guardians. The last act of Lady Fairland's life was one of charity; though the story is very simple, it may be told.

There was a poor woman in the neighbourhood, whose husband, idle and unthrifty, had deserted and left her and her helpless little ones in great distress. Ill as she was, Lady Fairland ordered everything necessary for their immediate relief, and directed that Tom Wakeum should forthwith set out on a horse laden with the supplies. On hearing the trampling of the horse in the court below, she requested to be raised from her bed, and placed in an easy chair near the window, that she might have the satisfaction of seeing Tom depart on the last act of Christian charity it would ever be her lot to perform. Her wish was complied with; and as her two eldest daughters were arranging the pillows in her chair, Sir John came into the room. He expressed his surprise to see her up, knowing how ill she was, and so near her end. Nancy told him what had been her mother's orders.

"Thank God," said Lady Fairland, "that poor woman and her children will now be saved. When I am gone, remember her; for think what are the anxieties of a mother for her offspring!" She pressed her hands together, and looked earnestly in the face of her husband, as she added, "My own heart tells me. By it I have learnt to know what must be those of that

poor distressed woman. Oh ! Sir John Fairland, you will remember your promise to me. Let not the prayer of a dying wife be made to you in vain. Bless your children with a father's love. And you, my children, love and be obedient to your father, and the promise of blessing to those who honour their earthly parents shall be yours. For myself, I die in peace with all the world, praying God to be forgiven, even as I forgive."

She looked up imploringly, as she spoke these last words, took the hand of her husband and pressed it to her lips, and then, placing her feeble hands on the heads of her daughters, and solemnly pronouncing a blessing on each, as they kneeled at her feet, she kissed them tenderly, and, wearied with the efforts she had made, sank back in her chair.


Sir John Fairland was deeply affected ; he pressed his lips on her pale forehead and cheeks, and repeatedly said in the most agitated manner, "Sarah, forgive me ; I hate myself ; forgive me, Sarah. I will love the children ; I am not the hard-hearted wretch you take me for ; I will love them. But what will they do, what shall we all do, without you ?"

Again and again did he renew these assurances of feeling and affection ; and when Lady Fairland fell back in her chair in a fainting fit, from which she was never more restored to life and sense, his distress at the death of the woman he had so injured, and who in the midst of all truly loved him, was so great that he gave himself up to a paroxysm of the most violent sorrow.

Sir John was taken almost by force from the chamber of death, and seemed for some days to find no possible source of consolation but in ordering the most expensive funeral that could be devised, and in having the children with him, caressing and ordering everything for them ; such being the first proofs of the fatherly care he bestowed upon them in compliance with his promise to their mother.

We shall not pause to give an account of the funeral pomp ; the most touching part of the ceremony was that which was unhired ; for the tenants of Sir John and the poor of the neighbourhood, who had so much cause to revere and love their late benefactress, of their own accord assembled and formed themselves into a little procession of mourners, following the remains of Lady Fairland from her late residence to the parish church.

Sir John felt so much the loss he had sustained that for a while not even Miss Ellen Gilbard dared venture upon the least attempt at consolation, beyond such sympathy as might be



expressed by her deep and fashionable mourning, a very long face, and a most solemn demeanour. Had she behaved otherwise, or had she attempted to resume the reins of domestic government during the season of those first and salutary impressions of honest sorrow in the mind of Sir John, she felt assured he would at once have turned her out of doors. • But she knew her man, and patiently bided her time. She knew that the human mind, like the tide, has its ebbings and flowings, and that she must wait for the turning of it ere she could once more endeavour to float her own bark of adventure on its cruise of good-fortune.

She did not wait long; for, violent as had been the grief of Sir John Fairland, it was but the sorrow of a man; and what is man? So inconstant, so changing, so ready to forget, and to return to his old follies or old sins, so prone to form new ties and new connections, that we question whether, at the expiration of six months, Sir John would have desired, had it been possible, that the wife whose loss he had so deeply regretted should be restored to him. We question, also, whether he did not at the end of that brief space think that all was for the best, and that in Lady Fairland and her frequent reproaches about his misappropriation of her fortune an obstacle to his peace was now happily removed. Be this as it may, certain it is that at the end of six months he one day remarked to Mr. Noland, who came on a matter of business to the hall, "I think that Miss Ellen Gilbard has the handsomest foot and the best-turned ankle I ever saw in all my life. She is a very fine woman, too, for thirty-five; she does not look more than five and twenty."

Mr. Noland answered only with an emphatic "Hem," and immediately after inquired concerning the health of Sir John's children, noticing how much he thought the eldest girl grew like her late lovely mother, both in the beauty of her person and the sweetness of her temper.

"Do you think so, Noland?" was all the reply that could be drawn from the baronet, and that was spoken in a tone of the utmost indifference; and then he at once turned the discourse into another channel, and asked Noland (whom he knew to be, like himself, a thorough Jacobite) if there was any good news from over the water, and how the people of Exeter were disposed towards the Hanoverian king, and if there was any reasonable hope of giving him a seat something lower than the throne.

Mr. Noland was at the moment too much interested by the

glimpse he had obtained of the politics and intrigues that were going on at Northleigh Hall to think much about those of St. Germain's or St. James's, or about the contests of King George and the Pretender. And seeing he could render no service just now for the children of Sir John, he bade him suddenly a good morning, and left him to his own infatuated counsels and fancies.

The work of folly on the one hand and artifice on the other was soon completed. We feel too much disgust at this part of our story to dwell on particulars ; we shall, therefore, hurry it over as briefly as possible.

Exactly two months after Sir John Fairland had communicated to his attorney the important discovery he had made, that Miss Ellen Gilbard's foot and ankle were such models of grace and beauty, and that a fat woman of thirty-five, fashionably dressed and well rouged, might pass for one of five and twenty, he, having full power to make "any Joan a lady," conferred that honour on his late wife's housekeeper and companion, and suffered her to assume an unlimited and tyrannical sway over his house, his household, his children, and himself.

How it happened that a man who had turned a deaf ear to all the remonstrances by which a beautiful and noble-minded woman strove to gain merely justice for herself and children, should now surrender himself up to be ruled and *henpecked* (as Tom Wakeum used to call it) by a woman infinitely her inferior in person, mind, and character, and who brought him nothing but a string of pauper relatives to batten on his means—how all this happened we cannot pretend to explain. Folly, art, infatuation, might each have done something, and habit more. But our own opinion is, that, as the old epitaph expresses it on the tomb of the Devonshire knight,¹ who slew another and afterwards fell on his own sword, it was of *Righteous Heaven the Retribution Just*. Most just that the woman whom Sir John Fairland had suffered to become the persecutor of his amiable wife, and the prime mover of all his injustice to his children, should now make him pay the penalty of his offences by sitting down by his side the domestic tyrant and "she-wolf" of all his days to come. She had also the advantage of a much stronger mind than Sir John possessed. The ascendancy of a strong mind where there is no restraining principle, when brought into close contact with a weak one, is almost invariably irresistible. History and biography are full of such examples ; and never was there a more

¹ Sir John Fitz, of Fitzford.

fearful one among the stories of private life than that which we have undertaken to record.

We pass in silence all the wily steps, the petty innovations, the serpent-like windings, or the bold springs made by this woman in her determination to gain power; we go at once to her great acts of tyranny, and to the passive resistance of the unhappy man she had so completely won and subdued to her purpose.

One wet and wretched morning, when (as Tom Wakeum said in commenting on the circumstance many years after its occurrence) it was too bad to turn out the dogs, that worthy was ordered to drive in an old shabby coach, drawn by the two worst horses in the stable, and in most homely trim, the three daughters and the son of Sir John Fairland (the boy not ten years old) from their father's hall and their birthplace to an old, ill-conditioned, ill-furnished house of Sir John's, about three miles distant from Northleigh, to which the stepmother had decreed their banishment. She alleged that she could not live with them, as she had found them already disposed to be disobedient and insolent to her. An old man-servant and a woman, both in the pay and the interests of the new Lady Fairland, were appointed as their sole attendants; indeed, they had nothing superfluous.

All the neighbourhood was astonished, and cried, "Shame!" but it was of no consequence. At first Sir John drove nearly every day to see them, then his visits were reduced to twice a week, then once a week, till, tired out with the sight of his children's unhappiness on the one hand, and the perpetual worry and quarrelling these poor creatures were made the subject of by his wife on the other, Sir John reduced his visits to once a month, and finally gave them up altogether.

The first Lady Fairland had brought to Northleigh Hall immense riches in her personal effects, such as plate, jewels, tapestry, damasks, and a wardrobe of silks, fine laces, and clothes. But the step-dame suffered none of these things to find their way to the children, who were allowed only the very plainest and meanest attire.

The sending off the young people was not the only remove from Northleigh Hall: the old and faithful housekeeper and every servant who would not submit to the arbitrary rule of the new mistress were paid and turned out of doors. Only Tom Wakeum stayed and defied her, though with just sufficient civility not to irritate her ill-humour beyond all bounds. He

was his master's long-trying, rough, but faithful servant : neither with him nor with the equally rough water-dog Jowler dared she meddle.

Now and then, at his own entreaty, she indulged Sir John with inviting his terrified children to spend a day at the hall ; but on these occasions the family quarrels were so great that the visits were at last given up.

In the course of two years after her marriage, Lady Fairland became the mother of two children, a boy and a girl, to whom the names of Abraham and Elizabeth were given. It was soon apparent that the children of the former marriage were to be entirely neglected and forgotten in the delight experienced on account of the second family.

Not many weeks after Sir John had altogether ceased seeing his children in the old house, an event occurred which, in the end, was productive of very memorable consequences. It was the well-known custom of the baronet, who was an early riser, to take his walk, on the mornings he did not go out hunting, in a meadow that lay at the back of a small wood near his own mansion. A seat under a very aged and spreading elm stood not far from the entrance of the field, and there he would repose himself, from time to time, during his walk.

On the morning of which we are now speaking he was somewhat surprised by seeing a woman, who had a small bundle by her side, seated under the elm. The place and the hour were unusual for such a visitant, and Sir John paused a moment ere he advanced.

The woman rose, and on her turning towards him, to his great surprise he recognized in the intruder on his privacy the humble friend and poor cousin of his first wife. He knew that in former times Mrs. Morton had been ardently attached to the deceased Lady Fairland ; and though in the family disputes which she had frequently witnessed she had never in any way leaned towards Sir John Fairland in his exertion of arbitrary power, yet she had never quarrelled with him. Sir John, though he did not like her, had always felt for her a degree of involuntary respect ; she was, as he knew, through having of necessity often been brought into close contact with her when in the early years of his first marriage she lived under his own roof, a good, well-principled woman. She left it only to marry the poor curate whose death had made her penniless. In those years she had been a sort of restraint upon Sir John. She had

made him feel uncomfortable in her presence ; her uprightness, her great spirit in defence of whatever was true, just, and honest, had often crossed his temper and his will. She became disagreeable to him, and since the new rule of things came in at Northleigh Hall Mrs. Morton kept aloof from it altogether.

He thought it very strange she should now, as it were, way-lay him. She said at once, after respectfully greeting him, that she had been there, waiting for him, ever since six o'clock in the morning.

"Waiting for me!" exclaimed Sir John. "Pray may I ask what may be the business which should occasion it?"

"Certainly," replied Mrs. Morton. "Sir John, mine is a business of no common kind."

"Pray, madam, resume your seat," said Sir John. "Is there anything I can do to oblige you?"

"Much, very much," answered Mrs. Morton, in an agitated tone, as she sank down upon the seat, and Sir John took his by her side. After a little while, in which she made a strong effort to repress her disturbed feelings, and to gain courage to speak the full purpose of her mind, she continued: "Sir John, I do not come on my own account. I come for the sake of the children of my lost and beloved benefactress, once your wife. Sir John, you do not, you cannot know it; your children are starving."

He started and changed colour; his countenance was indeed altered.

"Ay, Sir John, you may well start at hearing such a word; for they are your children. But so cruelly is all intercourse prevented between you and them, that you have not the most distant idea of the miserable condition to which they are reduced. Oh! Sir John, as you are a man, as you are a father, call up your spirit, exercise your own legitimate authority, and suffer no one, wife or no wife, thus to trample on the natural claims of your own offspring by her who was a wife to you indeed. Sir, you promised Lady Fairland on her deathbed that you would be a loving father to her children."

"And pray wherein have I failed?" he asked sternly.

"In giving up your own natural and rightful control over them to another, who has not only exercised, but abused it; who has employed it, if not for their destruction, at least for their misery. Sir John," she continued, tearing open the little parcel

she had brought with her—"Sir John, is this bread" (producing the piece of a loaf coarse almost to blackness) "fit for Sarah Fairland's children?" She broke it before him; he took a portion from her hand, and kept it.

"I know," she said, after a moment's pause, "I know that what I now do and say will procure me such ill blood at Northleigh Hall that every means will be tried, were it possible, to ruin me in revenge for it. But I care not; I will do what is right. I will speak the truth in the face of the world, though I and my fatherless children should beg our bread from door to door in requital for it. I fear not. Sir John, do you, can you forget the dead? the dead in her who was once most dear to you?"

"No, woman, no," said Sir John, much moved; "but wherefore these questions? I do not forget the dead. I have, perhaps, but too much cause for remembering."

"Think, then—Oh! think that in me, in the voice of the living friend, you hear that of your lost wife, who from her grave—the grave to which she was hastened, I will not say by whose unkindness—now pleads with you. Think you hear her calling upon you, and saying, 'As you shall answer it to God at the dread day of account, I bid you do justice to my children.' Sir John, do you know how they are kept, and to what indignities, what hardships, what companionship they are exposed?"

"I know nothing to their injury," said Sir John.

"Hear it then from me, and know the truth," continued Mrs. Morton, with the same energetic manner in which she had hitherto addressed him. "Their food is often such as you would not give to the very beggar at your gates. Their clothing is mean and contemptible, their society that of any who will come to their door and take compassion on them, so as to supply them with some aid, some comfort. You have daughters, sweet young creatures, approaching towards womanhood. I am assured that many idle young men, of far inferior birth and station, have sought to obtain a familiar footing with them. Is this fitting company, think you, for the daughters of Sir John Fairland? Is this the way in which they experience a father's protection and a father's care? Sir John, look into your own heart, search there, and then answer to yourself, have you fulfilled the promise that you made to the dying saint, your wife, in respect to her children? In her name, in God's name, I look for a reply."

The uncommon spirit, the energetic manner, the deep feeling which Mrs Morton displayed, as she thus addressed Sir John Fairland, absolutely overcame him ; he stood silent with awe before her. A poor widow, who toiled for her daily bread, painfully, humbly, thus had the power to confound and render dumb with shame a rich baronet ; so great, so paramount is the force of truth when urged by a brave and noble spirit. He did not utter one word in reply ; for even in this moment of strong emotion there was something of pride that led him to maintain an obdurate reserve, a sullen silence, when he felt he could neither condemn nor confute his accuser.

Both were now standing. Mrs. Morton looked him in the face. "What, not a word, Sir John? Give me but one word of hope for your children. I ask it in the name of her who loved them and loved you so well. One word ; it is all I ask."

"Well, then, take it," said Sir John sternly ; "I will do them right."

He prepared to leave her. "May God bless you," she said, "for that word ! I see by your indignant looks that the storm is up. May it fall on the right head !"

Sir John Fairland waved his hand, and they parted.

CHAPTER IV.

"They threat me ; I shall never come to bliss
Till all these mischiefs be return'd again,
Even in their throats that have committed them."

SHAKESPEARE.

SIR JOHN returned home immediately, entered the house by a private door towards the garden, spoke to no one, and instantly sought Lady Fairland. Without even the ceremony of knocking he opened her dressing-room door. As she looked up from her toilet she was surprised to observe his darkened brow and the stern and angry expression of his whole countenance, whilst he addressed her with a short, abrupt manner, and inquired with passionate earnestness, "whether she had of late visited his children, and personally acquainted herself with their condition?"

"No, Sir John," she replied. "No, indeed ; I have not personally sought them. But what means this rude intrusion at the hour of my toilet, and these dark looks ? It is not very likely, I think, that I should seek your children, to expose myself to a repetition of that disrespect with which they have invariably treated me ever since my marriage with their father—for *that* was my offence—and which you, Sir John, have but too much encouraged, by not checking them in the first instance, and by not teaching them their duty to your wife."

"I encourage my children to treat you with disrespect?" said Sir John. "You know the charge is false. It is but too probable that if they ever did treat you, as you say they did, with disrespect, it arose from your own exertion of an unwarrantable tyranny over the offspring of my first marriage. They *had* a tender mother ; but I need not point out to the woman who for so many years experienced her bounty as a mistress, what was her worth."

"As a mistress ! Your former wife my mistress, indeed ! You speak, Sir John, as if I had been the servant, rather than the friend and companion, ay, and the equal of your first wife."

"Her equal you never were," replied Sir John passionately. "In you there was nothing either of birth or manners to make you such. Her companion, it is true, you were, for your own purposes—which I have since learnt too well—and you were so far a friend to her that, by breaking her heart, you helped her to that heaven where she is now at peace."

"What means all this?" exclaimed Lady Fairland, extremely astonished at a kind of language and a bitterness of tone and manner such as in all their quarrels, frequent as they were, she had never before witnessed in Sir John. But he had been greatly worked upon by the honest vehemence of Mrs. Morton, and by a full knowledge of the ill-treatment of his children. Lady Fairland, with all her cunning, and notwithstanding the ascendancy she had so strangely acquired over the mind of a weak, capricious husband, had yet to learn that there are moments when, under the influence of a strong passion, the weak and usually pusillanimous will burst their trammels, and speak home-truths respecting the vices of the very creatures by whom they have hitherto been most commonly held in awe. Even so was it now. Sir John Fairland was in a hot mood, and cared not what he said, nor with what consequences.

Determined, however, to face it out, and if possible to turn the current of the angry waters into another channel, Lady Fairland now fiercely reproached him for his injustice in charging her with the neglect of his wilful and worthless offspring, for whom she had cared even as for her own.

"What, madam!" exclaimed Sir John, seizing her arm and holding her firmly by it, as with the other hand he held out before her the piece of bread he had received from Mrs. Morton. "Is *this* such bread as you would give to your own children? Yet this you give to the children of Sarah Fairland. Look at it, handle it, taste it; for the very dogs that feed from your hand have you better catered than for my children."

Lady Fairland looked confounded; she was for the moment absolutely dumb from surprise. It was evident that Sir John had become acquainted with the truth; he must have visited the children suddenly without her knowledge. She was preparing to meet his accusations with an angry retort, when Sir John, who by the violence of his passion had worked himself into boldness, cut short her purpose by making known his pleasure in a manner that convinced her he would be obeyed.

"Hark you, madam," he said, "I will no longer suffer these

indignities to be offered to me and to my children. I have been weak, too easily led, too much the slave of your will. But all things have a limit, and your line is nearly run out. My children shall henceforth live under my own roof, if you like it or not. I shall not, however, immediately bring them hither. For the present they shall be cared for where they now are under my direction. I shall think, at my leisure, where it will be best to fix their future home. My eldest born, Sarah's son, shall be placed under proper care, and my daughters shall be taught as Sarah would have had them, so that in due time perchance they may resemble their mother. Who shall say nay to it? And I will find some way in which to show my thankfulness to the friend—the true friend—who had the courage to step in and save a father from the shame and misery of being made the tool to destroy his own children. Now you know my pleasure. Do not reply. I want not to quarrel with you; but you know my will, and as God shall judge between us, it shall be fulfilled. Not a word in opposition; I will hear nothing”

He rushed from Lady Fairland, who would have detained him, and saw her no more that day.

The result of Mrs. Morton's spirited conduct was, that not only immediate and proper care was shown to the children, but for some few years their condition was much ameliorated. The boy Charles was sent to a grammar school, where he made more than ordinary progress under an excellent master. The girls were also sent to a well-conducted school, the mistress being the sister of Mrs. Morton's deceased husband, and they also benefited by instruction and good example.

For Sir John, though his worthless wife had been compelled at the moment to bend before the storm that so fearfully burst upon her, yet by her artful demeanour and her knowledge of the man with whom she had to deal, she soon regained that ascendancy which for a time had been shaken, but not destroyed. Sir John was the slave of evil habits; by the force of circumstances and strong passion, he could now and then break through them, but he had neither strength of mind nor perseverance sufficient to shake them off altogether. It soon became evident that, from supineness of temper and the love of ease, rather than hold a perpetual domestic warfare with Lady Fairland, he yielded to her almost as absolutely as he did before their last bitter quarrel, and bowed once more beneath the yoke which had formerly so long galled him. He resumed it with

the most passive indifference, if that could be called such, which in a great measure arose from the very recklessness of despair. We must now speak of other matters.

Notwithstanding a vast deal of pomp and display, and many attempts to gain a character for hospitality, the second Lady Fairland's cruel conduct to the offspring of the first marriage got wind, and was so much talked of, and Mrs. Morton so much admired for the bold and fearless part she had taken for their welfare, that the neighbourhood began to be very distant towards the stepmother of those innocents, and at last altogether shunned her society. Northleigh Hall gradually became more and more deserted; and consequently the vicinity became so very disagreeable both to its master and mistress, that they earnestly wished to remove elsewhere.

Whilst they were considering what could be done for the best at such a juncture, it was discovered that a very considerable portion of the old house was in a dangerous state. Sir John determined that to rebuild would be cheaper in the end than to repair. For this purpose another residence, at least for a time, became absolutely necessary; and if he should find himself more comfortable in his new home than in his present neglected mansion, very possibly he might continue there during the remainder of his days. Neither Sir John nor his lady were sorry to have so good an excuse for quitting Northleigh, as nobody could now say they had been driven from it by what were so evident, the slights and the daily increasing neglect of their neighbours.

Just at this crisis the proprietor of Hartland Abbey (a lady and a minor) was in such delicate health, that it was deemed necessary for her recovery that she should reside in Italy for some years; and thither her guardian, who felt a paternal care for her, proposed to conduct her with the least possible delay. In Hartland Abbey she had never resided, and it was to let. Singularly enough, about the same period, Mr. Noland, on the death of an aged uncle, came into possession of a small estate, together with a good house and grounds, in the vicinity of Hartland. Thither he at once retired, intending for the future merely to carry on a part of his business; a practice sufficient to oblige a few of his old clients, and to secure to himself some not very laborious occupation.

Sir John Fairland knew all this, and not doubting that his old attorney would still feel disposed to do for him a friendly

office, wrote to him without delay on the affair he had so much at heart—namely, to become the tenant of the Abbey. Mr. Noland readily undertook the negotiation, and managed it to the satisfaction of all parties.

On the Michaelmas Day, therefore, of that year from which the lease was dated, did Sir John Fairland remove, first his choicest pictures, his valuables, and his household goods, and then himself, his lady, his children, and the greater number of his domestics, to the old monastic pile—HARTLAND ABBEY.

CHAPTER V.

"The mansion's self was vast and venerable,
With more of the monastic than has been
Elsewhere preserved; the cloisters still were stable,
The cells, too, and refectory, I ween :
An exquisite small chapel had been able,
Still unimpair'd, to decorate the scene ;
The rest had been reform'd, replaced, or sunk,
And spoke more of the baron than the monk."

BYRON.

OF the first few years of Sir John Fairland's residence at Hartland Abbey, we shall but notice one circumstance which occurred soon after his removal thither ; it was, that his wife recommended to his notice and introduced into the family a young man, a distant relation of her own, whom she called cousin Richard, in the capacity of chief steward and secretary to Sir John.

Mr. Richard Graves was expert in business, shrewd, quick, and observing ; indeed, insinuating in his manners, wherever it became worth his while to please. He deemed himself philosophical ; and as Lords Hervey, Bolingbroke, Chesterfield, and other men of talent and eminence in their day, avowed themselves free-thinkers, it became rather fashionable with the pretenders to abstract science and other coxcombs of the time to profess themselves free-thinkers also ; and if, like Mr. Richard Graves, they happened to be rogues to boot, it was very convenient thus to shake off the shackles of moral and religious obligation. Graves, supported by the paramount influence of Lady Fairland, soon gained a complete hold over the mind and affairs of Sir John, and somehow contrived in so many instances to confuse the one and complicate the other, that he showed as much dexterity in such achievements as if he had been in the full practice of a pettifogging attorney. He had indeed been trained in the office of one with excellent skill ; his removal from the desk of this exemplary master to the service of Sir John was occasioned by the latter offering a more tempting prospect to his future and longsighted calculations.

He had, therefore, eagerly availed himself of his present position, and entered upon its profits (which he called duties) as soon as they were chalked out for him by his obliging cousin, the baronet's lady.

Charles Fairland, the eldest son of the first marriage, had now attained his twentieth year; and though knowing that the power of his father over his own estates, and those which he held in right of his former wife, was such that he could at any time cut him off and his sisters also from all inheritance, and give the whole to his second family, yet could Charles never prevail with himself—for he was naturally of a high spirit—to treat his stepmother with other than distant and haughty respect. He longed for independence, and had often entreated his father to bring him up to some profession—the church, the bar, the army, anything—rather than make him a gentleman at large, with no certainty of any provision hereafter. But hitherto, in reply to all these most urgent and rational entreaties, he had obtained nothing more from his father than vague and indecisive answers. One step, however, all the children of the first marriage had gained—they were suffered to live, though very unhappily, under the same roof with their father at the Abbey.

One day Sir John was sitting in his own private apartment, called the Abbot's Chamber, when he was surprised by the sudden entrance of his son Charles, who came before him equipped for a journey. At all times there was little cordiality between the father and the son. The former had been strongly prejudiced against his presumptive heir by the arts of the woman who was his second wife; and the latter, who looked upon her as the cause of his own mother dying of a broken heart, and of the long suffering, the cruel neglect experienced by his sisters and himself in their childhood, did not feel that reverential respect which it is to be wished every son should entertain towards a father.

Hence had arisen great dissensions and much misery between them. Domestic quarrels are always the bitterest; and if very near relatives do not love each other, they seldom stop at indifference; hatred too often springs up from the ground that has been fertilized and sown by self-interest, jealousy, and deceit on the one hand, and by injured rights and irritated passions on the other. The estrangement which of late had kept father and son aloof from each other arose to such a degree that they now seldom met, although dwelling under the same roof;

and when they did so, it was only to exchange angry words or complaining and reproachful expressions.

Sir John was, therefore, the more surprised to see his son Charles enter his apartment in a manner so unceremonious, and all at once address him with a bold, determined, and excited air, "Sir, as a son, as your eldest son, however deeply I may feel I have been injured, I do not think it right to leave your house for ever without acquainting you with my purpose, and seeking from you some assistance to further me in the enterprise I have now in view. And, if it may be so, I would receive from you a father's blessing, should so much of natural feeling still exist in your heart towards me as to allow you to give it."

The voice of Charles Fairland faltered as he spoke these last words, he could not altogether conceal his emotion, and the tears which rose in his eyes at the moment he came to bid farewell showed that, however ill-used, he remembered that he was still a son.

Sir John did not at once send him from his presence in an angry tone, as of late he had been so much accustomed to do. On the contrary, he bade him speak out and tell his purpose; and if it were such as he could approve, perhaps Charles might find that he would assist it more than he anticipated. There was something so unusual both in the manner and the looks of the baronet as he said this that his son was struck by it. He felt assured that some change (he could not guess from what cause) was working in his father's mind; indeed, he had suspected it before. He had seen, for the last fortnight, that Sir John kept much alone, shunning the attentions even of his wife.

"Sir," continued Charles, in reply to his father's bidding, not unkindly intimated, "I presume you cannot be ignorant that the cause we have both so much at heart needs all the support that can be given to it. Prince Charles Edward, with the brave Highland chieftains, and the gallant army of all ranks who have followed his fortunes, are now on their way to the capital of England. The last accounts that I have seen state that the Prince has raised his standard at Derby, and invited all his true friends to join him there in his meditated march on London. Sir, I am about to obey this summons. Give me, then, the means to depart, that I may offer my services to the Prince, as becomes a son of yours. Your name, your family, your influence in the west will be certain to procure for your

eldest son a commission in the royal army. But if you deny me aid, then farewell indeed. I shall still go, but not as a beggared outcast from the house of my father. I shall conceal my real name, throw myself as a volunteer into the ranks of him whom the usurping Hanoverians call the Pretender, and trust to occasion and my own good sword to win a way to honour. Now, sir, you know my purpose. I entreat you, with all respect, to let me know yours. I cannot anticipate any regret on my departure, or that the absence of your eldest son will be other than welcome to yourself and Lady Fairland."

Sir John heard his son with patience, though with astonishment. He seemed moved. And if, as philosophers have supposed, a man has two spirits contending within him, the one for good the other for evil, certain it is that the good spirit was the most active in the breast of Sir John Fairland at this moment. He was greatly disturbed, and with feelings to which he had long been dead, fixing an earnest and a grieved look upon his son, he said,—

"You do not know what you say, or how little cause you have, with me at least, to suppose that your absence is a thing to be desired. I—I am not well pleased with some circumstances that have come to light of late, and with others which at the present moment are more than suspected by me. But this is not the matter in question. It is impossible that I should consent to your leaving the Abbey on so wild an expedition. I have received private intelligence. The Highland chiefs have refused to follow their Prince in his determination to march on London; and they are quarrelling among themselves. They have, I am assured, already commenced their retreat, and it cannot be doubted, that the ruin of Charles Stuart's cause will be the consequence. Here are my letters (he handed them to his son as he spoke). Would you wish to peril my head and your own by bringing us both into suspicion? Would you wish to cause a forfeiture of my estate, and all to no purpose? Under such circumstances as you will see stated in those letters it would be madness to talk of joining the unfortunate man you are so desirous to serve."

Charles Fairland was surprised and vexed to the very soul. But he stood silent, not knowing what to answer.

Sir John, after a short pause, resumed, "But come now: tell me, is not this sudden resolution to leave your father's house occasioned by this foolish love affair that I hear you are engaged

in? Tell me truth—is not Miss Isabella Fitzwarren at the bottom of it?”

“Sir,” replied Charles, “I will not deceive you. Indeed, it is so unusual, and so gratifying, to have you ask about anything in which my happiness is concerned, that I rejoice to have it in my power to be as explicit with you as you could desire on a subject of vital interest to myself. It is true I love Miss Fitzwarren.”

“I know little about her,” said Sir John, “except having sometimes seen her with the girls at the Abbey. Whose daughter may she be? Who has the care of her?”

“She is an orphan, sir; her father was in the army, and served under the Duke of Marlborough. He was a very gallant officer, and lost his life in action. His daughter lives with a widowed aunt, Mrs. Elford, who considers her as her own child. Indeed, sir, Miss Fitzwarren has very great merits.”

“Has she any money?” inquired Sir John.

“None, sir,”

“How then could you fall in love with her?” said Sir John, looking at his son, as if to have something explained which he could not understand.

“Sir,” replied Charles, “the eldest son of a man of such estates as you possess, both in your own right and in that of my mother, might, I presume to hope, be allowed to give his hand where his heart was fixed without prejudice to his family or to his duty.”

“You talk like an inexperienced boy,” said Sir John. “How are you to live if you marry without money? You have no profession, and are doing nothing for yourself.”

“Give me, then, the means, open to me a way, to find employment for myself, and I will never burthen you more. O, sir! O, my dear father! do not turn a deaf ear to the solicitations of your son; do not condemn me to a state of perpetual dependence. Finally, perhaps, some one may prevail with you to cut me off, when, from having no profession, time and habit may have rendered me incapable of procuring a maintenance. Do not thus deal by the child of her who was your most faithful and devoted wife, and the hope of whose birth—for so I have been told—was the means of preventing the most disastrous event that could have befallen you and me and my sisters—a separation from our dear mother. If I have no other claim on your affection, let me not lose this.”

Sir John Fairland was greatly agitated ; he looked at his son, but did not immediately reply ; he paced the apartment, knit his brows, and appeared to suffer under his own reflections as much as he did under the energetic remonstrances of his son. At length he took Charles's hand and wrung it in silence. The youth saw that, if he had not convinced his father, he had at least made some softening impression upon him, for in what had passed both his voice and his manner denoted sorrow more than anger.

"Sir," he said, "I rejoice to see this ; suffer me to open my heart to my father, and I have every hope that you will not find any feeling there which you would altogether condemn." He paused.

"Speak on," said Sir John ; "I am not displeased with your frankness."

"While I live you shall never have cause to be so," replied Charles, with warmth. "Give me, then, my dear father, either the means to support my station as your eldest son, who must hereafter maintain the name and honour of your house, or by giving me some profession, enable me to support myself with Isabella the choice of my heart, and I will burthen you no more."

"This is folly," said Sir John Fairland ; but he did not say it angrily. "You will find twenty girls that will please your fancy quite as well as this, besides having fortune to bring with them."

"Indeed, sir, I shall not. Isabella is not one whose place could be easily supplied ; her merit, like her beauty, is of no common order, and it is no common affection that she has raised in my bosom. My feelings are not to be changed. And even if they were, I could not now, as a man of honour, desert her, having, I acknowledge, won an interest in her heart."

Sir John frowned.

"Nay, frown not, my dear father ! Think how we have been placed, I and my dear sisters. The unkindness of our stepmother has often driven us from your roof, and we have sought for kindness and society under that of Mrs. Elford. Thus did our intimacy with her and Isabella begin. Hence arose those daily walks in the woods of Hartland, and all that train of little circumstances by which young hearts are drawn to each other before they are aware of the chain by which they are bound. O, my father ! give me but some assurance that I

may believe you will not hereafter cast off my sisters and myself from your care, and I will pledge you the word of a son that, although I can never cease to love Isabella, I will never wed her unless I attain independence, or without your consent."

Sir John seemed much touched by these earnest remonstrances, and he gave his son a solemn promise that he would never abandon him or his sisters, would take into consideration all he had said, and that after his death Charles should find he was mistaken in thinking that he had disregarded the children of their ever-regretted mother.

Charles knew that his father was of a fluctuating mind, and that though when strongly touched in his affections he would mean well to-day, he would, alas! be turned aside to-morrow by the woman who had obtained so great an influence over him. He dared scarcely rely on these promises, yet was he rejoiced to find that the appeal he had so long wished to make to his father's feelings had been so well received.

There was another point he desired to touch upon—one of great delicacy—yet he knew not how to advert to it till his father gave him the opportunity by asking what it was that had caused him to more than hint his fears about his sisters and himself in time to come; in plain terms, what it was he apprehended?

"Our stepmother, Sir John," Charles replied, in a peculiar tone. "My father, I do not like to wound your feelings, more especially in this the first hour of confidence between us; yet there are things that ought to be told."

Sir John Fairland looked surprised.

"Sir," continued Charles, in a quick and agitated manner, as if determined to get through a task the most painful; "Sir, there are some who think that you are grievously abused, not merely by Lady Fairland, but by another individual in close combination with her for what is neither good nor honest—for what a son cannot name to a father."

Sir John started, turned deadly pale, and said eagerly, "Of whom do you speak?"

"Of Mr. Richard Graves, sir, your secretary."

Sir John Fairland absolutely gasped for breath on hearing this, so sudden, so unexpected was it, from the lips of his son. He dropped down in a chair that stood near him. So great was the shock, so strong the sense of injury within his bosom, that he lost all power of self-command. All that distance which he

had hitherto observed in making his son a stranger to his thoughts and fears, was in a moment forgotten ; and clasping his hands as he wrung them in the extremity of his passionate feelings, he set his teeth together, looked upward, and at length said, in the bitterness of his soul, "Curse her ! ungrateful woman. I had myself entertained some suspicions, but I thought I might be mistaken. I did not dream that her infamy was so barefaced as to have attracted the observation of others, and to learn it from my own son. And the scoundrel Graves ! I can now understand why I am so counselled by Lady Fairland to—and to trust my children to the care of Graves—honest Mr. Graves !—if anything should happen to me ! The villain ; he looks to step into my place ! But I will deal with him in a way he little thinks. Hark ye, Charles ; come hither. I should never have told you of these matters, but you glanced at them ; you spoke something, and I have said too much now to draw back. Can I trust you ? Will you forget the past, and be to me as a son indeed ?"

"Sir, I hope I have hitherto done nothing that should cause you to doubt my sense of duty, and that I may be trusted by my father."

"I believe it. You are a good youth. First, then, know that Graves has, I fear, led me into a most injurious money transaction with a fellow whom I have only this day discovered to be a cheat—aye, a villain. I cannot but suspect, from this and other circumstances, that my steward, my secretary, as you call him, relying on the easy trust which, at the instance of my wife, I have hitherto reposed in him, has some deep design on my property, and may need the help of a confederate."

"I am grieved, but not surprised to hear this," said Charles ; "but if this were the worst"—he paused, and Sir John filled up the pause by saying—

"It is not the worst. I am too much disturbed to be capable of cool consideration. I will now only say this. I have cause to suspect Graves and my wife—the wife who, I will confess to you, has of late made me the most miserable man alive. Yet there are circumstances ; I am too much in her power. I cannot, I dare not, do all I would do at this moment, unless my worst suspicions are confirmed. But I will take such measures that these wily serpents shall not escape chastisement. Charles, say not a word to any living creature, but watch closely ; keep an eye on Graves, on them both, and tell me all you hear, see,

suspect. Let not a word, a half-spoken word, escape you. In the interval I will lay a snare, and the devil, whom they have long served, will not be slow to lead them into it. But time will be required, some days at least, before my scheme can be brought to bear. Yet it will not, I trust, fail me. Remember, silence, caution, watchfulness. Farewell."

CHAPTER VI.

"The image of a wicked, heinous fault
Lives in his eye ; that close aspect of his
Does show the mood of a much troubled breast."

SHAKESPEARE.

WHEN Sir John Fairland dismissed Charles from his presence he was in a state of mind such as his son, who had seen him in many instances of passion, had never before witnessed. He proceeded forthwith to summon his secretary to attend upon him.

As Graves entered the room he looked up ; he was struck with the air of angry determination which at the moment was strongly imprinted on every feature of his hitherto complacent patron. Nor did he like the abrupt manner in which Sir John addressed him, saying,—

"So, Mr. Graves, I find by information I have this day received, from one whose accuracy I have never had cause to doubt, that it is known your friend, Mr. Sharp, has decamped ; and I also find that you, who undertook to manage the whole affair, have, by your negligence, let him finger the money before the security was completed. This man, Mr. Graves, was a money-borrower of your own recommending. You pressed the fellow on my notice, and urged me to supply him with the loan he wanted on his own terms, and by which I risked and have sustained a great loss. What have you to say to all this ?"

"Say, Sir John ?" replied Graves, somewhat abashed by the suddenness of the charge and the determination with which it was made. "To say, Sir John ? Why, I have this to say, that I am much surprised you should doubt my zeal to serve you, when I have toiled for you and made your affairs my own ever since I have been in your service. Suspensions such as these are most injurious to my character ; I feel them so much that I scarcely know what to answer."

"I believe you," said Sir John ; "I believe you know not how to evade the charge you cannot confute. I doubt not you have made my affairs your own, but whether most for my

interest or yours is a matter that may admit some question. How came it, sir, that the sum of money which, by your persuasion, I was induced to lend this very good friend and relative of yours, this Mr. Sharp, was taken from rents just received by you in my absence, and paid over to him before you had my sanction?"

"Sir John," answered Graves, "I did it by the authority of one who well understands your concerns, and who sanctioned the advance of the loan without delay. Lady Fairland, sir, was my authority for what I did."

"O! was she so?" said Sir John, biting his lip with passion whilst he spoke; and though he endeavoured to suppress his jealous rage, he was too strongly excited to keep it under. In spite of all his more prudent resolves, in spite of those cautions he had so lately enjoined on his son as necessary to observe towards Graves, he now exclaimed, "So, sir, you and Lady Fairland, it seems, managed this affair between you. I doubt it not by the result. Pray, sir, are there any other affairs in which you feel yourself authorized in my absence to step into my place with Lady Fairland?"

As Sir John uttered these rash words he looked Graves full in the face with an expression of fierceness in his own such as made the secretary tremble. But Graves endeavoured to regain his self-possession, as he said,—

"Sir John Fairland, your behaviour to me this evening is unaccountable. I am willing, however, to place the best construction upon it. Men are not always in the same mood, even with their most faithful friends. I am willing, therefore, to attribute the strangeness of your present manner to something having vexed you without doors, which you resent on me."

"The strangeness of my manner, sir!" exclaimed Sir John; "and you are willing to place the best construction on what I say and do! and this when I tell you that I am no longer deceived by you! This insolence is past bearing. But this is neither time nor place for such discussions. Look you, sir, to this money-lending business you have taken in hand. Look you find out this friend of yours who has possessed himself of my property by your means, or be the consequences on your own head. For, if there be justice in Heaven or law on earth, *you* shall pay dearly for your conduct. Look to it. And now, Mr. Graves, I hope we understand each other."

"We do indeed, Sir John ; and now I know what thanks I am to expect in return for all the services I have rendered you since I came under your roof."

"Talk of your services to me! Talk rather of your negligence. Where are the papers of so much consequence in my suit concerning Gilbert's mortgage? those papers, I mean, which you neglected to forward to the Master in Chancery during the last term. The court meets again in a week, and without them the Master cannot make his report. Where are those papers?"

"Safe, Sir John ; safe in my keeping. But with such a multiplicity of business as your affairs bring on me, I cannot always at a day's notice lay my hands on such documents as you may require. The papers, however, to which you allude shall be produced in good time for the court."

"In good time for the court!" said Sir John. "Nay, sir, to-night; this very night shall they be produced. I must despatch them to London early to-morrow, and this night do I insist on their being placed in my hands."

Sir John spoke this in a tone of the highest displeasure ; for he had worked himself into a vehement passion with his secretary.

"It is a late hour to demand of me such a search as I must make to find the missing papers, Sir John," replied Graves ; "wait till the morning."

"The *missing* papers! is it so? I guessed as much. And wait till the morning! But I will not wait till the morning; this night, this night will I have them." And ever contradictory and unstable in his resolves, Sir John, now completely forgetful of all his preconceived prudence, seemed determined to pick a quarrel with Graves rather than to keep the peace with him. He continued, "In this matter I will wait no man's pleasure but my own. Hark you, Mr. Graves ; either produce the papers this night, or quit my service for ever to-morrow morning. Now, sir, you know my mind, so make your choice."

Thus driven, Graves, who saw well enough from the altered tone and determined demeanour of his patron that he could not long hope to retain either favour or office, quitted the chamber in the utmost confusion of mind. Notwithstanding the time of night, he complied with Sir John's peremptory orders ; but in the hurry of searching among the documents at such an hour he unconsciously mixed up with those of Sir John one or two

private papers of his own (for Graves, with all his roguery, was careless and slovenly in matters of business) that were of a most curious and important nature. More of this anon.

After placing the bundle of papers required on the table, the secretary spoke only a few words, intimating to Sir John that he felt certain he would find there all he desired, though, from the hurried manner in which he had been called on to produce them at such a late hour, he had not had the opportunity of examining them or of arranging them in due order. He then retired slowly and sulkily from the apartment, lingering a moment at the door, as if he fancied that after all Sir John might call him back to bid him good-night, and so to soften matters between them, before he retired to rest; this had happened more than once, for some few occasional quarrels had occurred between Sir John and his secretary before now, and at their close, partly by his own audacity, and partly by Lady Fairland's interference, Graves had always come off victor, and been fully reinstated in his patron's favour. But it was not so in this instance; and Sir John let him go without offering a word to break the moody silence in which they parted for the night.

After he was gone, Sir John turned to the papers. They were really much wanted in Chancery, for among the benefits procured for him by Graves's management of his affairs was that of being always involved in law with some one or other, and often was the matter of contest worth neither the trouble nor the cost.

In taking up the papers a letter dropped from among them—the handwriting was that of Graves. Sir John Fairland saw at a glance it was one which in no way concerned his law affairs, and that the contents were of a different nature. But the writer was Graves, and convinced from an expression or two which caught his eye, as he carelessly unfolded the sheet, that in many respects it was one of importance to himself, he rejoiced in having the means of detecting his secretary in some new villainy. He turned to the back of the letter; but there was no address. It seemed to be a copy or rough draft of an epistle of more than ordinary interest, most especially to Sir John Fairland, and he began to read it.

He had not proceeded far when Tom Wakeum entered the room unobserved. As soon as his presence was noticed he was ordered to withdraw, but not before he had had time to perceive that his master's countenance was deadly pale, and that he shook in

every limb. Tom felt alarmed, and lingered unperceived near the door, and long after declared that as Sir John read on the letter he seemed absolutely frenzied from the force of his own indignant feelings. At length he became a little more composed, and refolding the paper the perusal of which had so much shaken him, put it into his pocket, and for some time paced slowly and thoughtfully up and down the apartment. He soon after quitted it for his own chamber, where he said to Tom, who had anxiously followed him, "I have been dreadfully deceived."

Lady Fairland had already retired for the night ; indeed, she was in bed and sleeping. According to the rumoured account of these circumstances, when they afterwards became the theme of public discussion, it was said that on suddenly awaking from her sleep Lady Fairland saw her husband leaning over the bed, with a lamp in his hand, and looking upon her with so fearful an expression of countenance that in the terror of the moment she screamed aloud. He bade her be silent, as she valued her life, or it would be worse for them both. It was further said, that he then proceeded to question her closely about Graves in a very vehement and strange manner, asking if he had ever addressed any letters to her ; and that she strongly denied ever having received any from him, either whilst he was under the same roof with her, or in his occasional absence from the Abbey.

Sir John, it was averred, seemed startled by the earnestness of her denial ; yet he was not satisfied, and he dropped some words which were sufficient to let Lady Fairland know that his passions as well as his suspicions were fearfully aroused. All at once he seemed to recover his self-possession, and, though she urged him to it, he absolutely refused to be more explicit, and finally retired to rest in another chamber, leaving her in doubt whether or not his intellects were disordered by the greatness of an internal struggle, the cause of which she too justly apprehended was jealousy awakened about herself.

CHAPTER VII.

“What damp hangs on me?
 These sprightly tuneful airs but skim along
 The surface of my soul, not enter there;
 She does not dance to this enchanting sound;
 How, like a broken instrument beneath
 The skilful touch, my joyless heart lies dead!
 Nor answers to the master's hand divine!”

YOUNG.

THE reader cannot have gone thus far without observing that, with all his faults and follies, Sir John Fairland was capable of strong impressions of what was good and right; of much natural affection when called forth by circumstances, or by an extraordinary appeal to his feelings. The great fault of his character was a fluctuating, an inconstant temper, arising from a want of steady principle. We need not illustrate these remarks by any other reference than to the scene in which we saw him act so prominent a part, where his right feelings overcame both his prejudices and his passions, so that he recalled his first and suffering wife at the very moment he was about to part from her for ever. But it has also been seen how transient was the impression; he had not resolution enough to make that recall a happy one, either to her or to himself. On the whole, allowing for a defective education and the want of a better example in early life, Sir John might be said to be rather a very weak than a very wicked man. It is, however, true that weakness often becomes the abettor of wickedness by a spiritless non-resistance of evil on the part of those who do not exert the authority they possess to check it.

So had it been with Sir John Fairland. He had never intended to become the enemy of his own children; but he was made such by the supine and cowardly yielding up of his own legitimate authority as a parent to the arbitrary power of his second wife. We have seen how much he was moved by the just remonstrances of his son; he had not been so touched since Mrs. Morton, some years before, had spoken to him in behalf of the children of his first marriage.

But the hoped-for effects of this memorable interview with his son were in a great measure neutralized by his own irresolution, his ungoverned temper, and the vacillations of his conduct. In vain had he enjoined on that son wariness and caution, when he observed neither himself, and by his own folly might be said to have defeated his own plans. There could not be a doubt that his jealousy had so betrayed itself, that it put both Graves and Lady Fairland on their guard. Even on the next morning a very close observer might have seen a change in their demeanour to each other and to all around them. Lady Fairland showed some little acts of kindness and attention to Charles and his sisters, and Graves was civil to them, and did not meet any one of the young ladies in the hall or in the galleries of the old Abbey without affording them a smile and a bow.

This complacent humour, hitherto so unusual, lasted for the next two days ; and a party of pleasure being proposed for the young people on the third, no objections were started. It was that they should go with Mrs. Elford and her niece to be present at the sports of a harvest-home in the neighbourhood. The farmer about to celebrate it with all the Devonshire customs (then far more numerous and generally observed than in the present day) was a man of substance and great hospitality, and had made known his purpose to entertain both rich and poor on the occasion.

At the date of our tale there were few things more joyous than a harvest-home in the west of England. The spacious farm-house, the indications of good cheer, the well-stocked barns, the ricks of hay, and the animated farm-yard, where the very poultry strutted, cackled, and crowed with a seeming consciousness of their own importance among the living subjects of so princely a domain, under the absolute government of the opulent master, were all objects of joy. But though few can look on the sight of corn and plenty in their own country without a feeling of thankfulness to a good Providence that has blessed their native land and made it fruitful, it was not alone the sight of sheaves and plenty which so much interested the young party, more especially the lovers, Charles and Isabella, on that day.

The scene around them was one of peculiar loveliness ; it was pastoral, and truly English. The hills were seen in gentle slopes, here and there animated by flocks and herds ; the tender green of the meadows was studded with the rich hues of summer

flowers ; and in the hedges, the foxglove, that grows with such extraordinary luxuriance in Devon, was seen in great abundance. Even the stubble fields, now alive with men, women, and children of all ages, presented such a picture of rural life, and added such cheerfulness to the scene, that many higher born might have envied, did they form a more just estimate of the distribution of human happiness than they are wont to do.

Among the many young women with tanned and glowing cheeks and laughing eyes, some pensive Ruth might perhaps be seen gleaning for some aged Naomi, whom years and infirmity kept at home ; and as the master of the land was neither niggardly nor selfish, he, like a second Boaz, had given orders that a generous remainder might be left for the gleaner's hand. After the young party had strolled from field to field, had chatted with the old folks, returned the bows and curtsies made to them by the young, and had given a goodnatured word and a pat on the head to the children, they proceeded to witness the loading of the wains and *the calling of the neck*. In their day the ceremony was a more striking sight than it is at the present time, although still kept up in some parts of the country.

The custom is thus observed. When the corn is all reaped, towards evening the harvesters carefully select some of the finest ears from the sheaves. These are tied together, and form what is called *the nac*, or *the neck*. This, ornamented with flowers twisted in with the reed, has a gay and tasteful appearance. The reapers then repair in a body to some hill or elevation, and there call or *holla the neck*. One of the men bears the offering, stands in the midst, raises it, whilst all the other labourers gather about him and form themselves into a ring. Each man holds aloft his hook, and with one accord they all shout, in the hearty endeavour which can be loudest, "Arnack, Arnack, Arnack ! We ha'un, we ha'un, we ha'un !" The shouts are several times repeated, as between each, probably as their way of libation, the firkin is handed round the circle. When the evening is fine, various bands of reapers may be heard for miles round, each stationed on some height, and shouting, as if in answer to each other. Women, girls, and children accompany the men to the performance of this ceremony, and may be seen, some with caps and bonnets decorated with flowers, others carrying boughs, and many dancing and singing, whilst the men practise the above rites in a circle. This very curious custom is considered by learned antiquaries to be derived from the Druids,

and to be nothing less than the offering of the first and the best fruits of the earth to the God of the harvest.¹ There is something peculiarly animating in its observance, as the echoes of their joyous shouts reverberate from hill to hill.

The little party from the Abbey now continued their walk, and passed in their way many of those wild and romantic scenes which render the neighbourhood of Hartland Abbey so peculiarly delightful. Beautifully wooded ravines appeared among the hills and extended close to the sea-shore ; whilst the broken cliffs and rugged precipices that overhung the rocks or beach below afforded a striking contrast to the bright verdure and the pastoral repose of the inland scene, more especially to the valley, above whose thick and venerable woods arose the dark and antiquated towers of the Abbey—for at the time of our narrative the hand of destruction had not been laid upon it. In this valley were seen “the dappled deer,” some enjoying the shade of over-arching boughs, and others on the banks of the clear stream slaking their thirst in its refreshing waters, whose murmurs, like the instrumental part of a concert, seemed to accompany the songs of the blackbird, the linnet, and the thrush, the only choristers then remaining within the holy vale, where once the chant of sacred melodies daily resounded to the praise of God, and of saints consecrated by the Church of Rome to prayer and worship.

If the eye turned from this charming valley towards the sea, the wooded heights on either side served like a rich framework to a picture, enhancing the beauty of the object within it. On this day it was one of grandeur and repose. The golden rays of the sun, almost too dazzling for sight, rested upon the waters in a long line of light, whilst many vessels with sails spread before the breeze, and many boats, like dark floating spots, were seen to glide over the calm and gleaming waves with a gentle and undulating motion.

When thus viewed under the repose of a day so still, so undisturbed by wind or tempest, there was in the valley of Hartland something sweetly soothing, friendly to meditation, and calculated to lull into tranquillity the disturbed passions of the soul. Its effects were not lost on Charles and Isabella. They had, if not long, yet dearly loved each other ; they had

¹ This account of calling the neck at the end of the harvest in Devonshire the writer has ventured to draw from her work, “The borders of the Tamar and the Tavy.”

felt all the pain arising from their uncertain prospects ; and though Charles, with all the ardour of a lover's mind, was willing to hope the best, and to think it would not be long ere his father would make some provision for him, and enable him to call Isabella his own, yet had he recently seen too much of Sir John's changeable disposition and of his stepmother's rancour entirely to indulge such hopes. Now and then the *tremor cordis* would come over him ; and although walking by the side of Isabella, her sylph-like form supported by his arm, and reading in her eye that love the expression of which not even the maiden bashfulness of seventeen could conceal, he did not feel altogether happy.

Yet angry with himself, and vexed that on a day set apart for rejoicing he should thus be assailed by doubts and depression, he said playfully, trying to force himself into cheerfulness (the most certain way to remain sad),—

“Let us, Isabella, return and seek my sisters ; they must be somewhere on the beach, and then we will once more join the harvest-home party. I will hope—but I cannot tell how it is ; never before this day did I look with such melancholy forebodings on the Abbey yonder. It seems to me, as it stands there encompassed by the dark woods, as if it were an abode fit neither for the peace of holy monks nor for domestic enjoyment.”

“Nonsense,” said Isabella, laughing. “You are thinking of your mother-in-law, as if she were the only inhabitant of those old weather-beaten towers ; but she is not so fearful a personage as your fancy would represent her. Let us seek your sisters ; the dear girls are far more cheerful than yourself. Do shake off this melancholy mood.”

Charles promised to endeavour to be cheerful, and they set off to seek his sisters on the beach.

It was towards evening when these young persons once more joined the festive scene. Many of the neighbouring gentry, most of the opulent farmers, a few of the clergy, and a host of youths and maidens, formed the upper ranks now assembled, who were to partake, at a separate table, of a very excellent supper ; whilst one of great abundance and no less merit in its way was to be served up in the huge old kitchen and in one of the barns, not only for the labourers, and servants, male and female, but for fathers, mothers, and grandfathers, who either worked now or formerly had worked on the farm or in the neighbourhood ; for all were welcome on this joyous night.

The evening was lovely. The wains, laden with corn and

surmounted by the reapers, brought home the harvest with great noise and shoutings. Nothing could exceed the boisterous joy of the whole assembly, both within and without the house. A cask of the best cider was set a-broach to drink a good luck to the harvesters. A dewy coolness was in the air, the more refreshing as the day had been intensely hot, and one of those showers, which often fall suddenly in the more hilly parts of Devon, especially near the sea, where they attract every wandering cloud, fell in large drops, and rendered the atmosphere fragrant. The fields and meadows around the house sent forth a delicious perfume of wild thyme and sweet herbs. Every one seemed to welcome the shower as peculiarly refreshing after the heats and labours of the day, for all had laboured ; even those who came only for pleasure found that, too, was not unmingled with toil.

And now came the hour when the rough but open-hearted master of the feast bade all his guests, from the highest to the lowest, be seated at the several tables, with a hearty welcome to such fare as he had to set before them. Ere any one ventured to take his seat, a blessing was invoked upon the board by good Parson Turnbull, who invariably made it a rule to act as voluntary chaplain to all the harvest-home suppers for as many miles round as his little fat ambling cob could contrive to carry him.

The guests were seated, the dishes uncovered, the viands smoked ; but all were silent. The knives and forks had all the noise to themselves, for at no period, either in town or country, were the English, especially of the humbler class, ever a talkative people over good cheer. But this discussed, and the ale, cider, and punch set flowing, it was altogether another thing. Toasts were given, healths were drunk and huzzaed again and again, bowls were filled, emptied, and replenished ; songs were sung, mirth was at its height, and laughter was re-echoed in roaring peals from the hall to the kitchen and the kitchen to the barn. Fiddles were set going, and pipe and tabor ; and the young and gay were soon footing it in little parties, according to their rank or their fancy, upon the turf in front of the house, and lighted by no other lamps than those the glowworm with her fairy taper might supply and the sweetly silvered orb of a rising moon. All were animated, all happy ; even Charles had forgotten his fears and his low spirits, and was dancing with all his might, and glancing sweet looks at his lively partner, the fair Isabella.

CHAPTER VIII.

"O! treach'rous night!
 Thou lend'st thy ready veil to ev'ry treason,
 And teeming mischiefs thrive beneath thy shade."

HILL.

"Farewell!—God knows when we shall meet again;
 I have a faint cold fear thrills through my veins
 That almost freezes up the heat of life."

SHAKESPEARE.

ON a bench beneath a spreading beech, opposite to where the young party from the Abbey were tripping it away to pipe and tabor, sat Tom Wakeum and an old man who was a hind in the service of the farmer. Tom had his eyes fixed on his young master with a thoughtful and even anxious expression, not at all in harmony either with the place or the hour. His neighbour on the bench remarked his manner, and observing to Tom that he thought he was a peg too low, asked him if he would take a cup of spiced ale or a pottle of cider.

Tom shook his head to the invitation, and proceeded thus to open his mind to his friend:—

"I'll tell you what it is, John Raikes. I'm in a molloncholly sort of a way to-night; for I don't like to see young master a dancing and jigging it away there so merrily, when I believe the devil is a warming the porridge for him at home. I heard our hellycat madam say this morning, with my own ears, to that proud, sly rascal Mr. Secretary, as she calls him, when neither him nor her knew that I was within earshot; I heard her say, says she: 'I'll be even with him yet, and Master Charles shall learn to his cost that he shall not complain of me, nor of you either, Mr. Graves, to his father, without having a score to settle with me for it.' I heard no more; but I don't like it."

"Think no more of it, then," said old Raikes; "I'll go and get the ale to drink confusion both to madam and her man with all my heart."

So saying Raikes set off for the purpose, and left his friend sitting alone upon the bench. On his return he observed that

Tom Wakeum looked, as he expressed it, "he could not tell how" "Why, now, what's this?" he inquired; "you look, Tom, as if you had seen Satan in his own proper person."

"Hush!" replied Tom. "I don't know but I have heard him since you left me just now; and yet, now I think about it, it can hardly be an evil spirit. The strangest thing has happened that ever you heard tell in all your life, and yet as true as the Bible. Do you know, John Raikes, you were hardly gone off this seat, when I heard a voice behind me say distinctly, 'Go home, Tom Wakeum; go home.' 'Go home!' said I, turning about to see the voice behind me; 'for what should I go home? Old master dines out at Squire Cornew's, and mistress has her maidens with her; what should I go home for?' Never trust me more, John Raikes, if a voice that couldn't be seen didn't make answer and say, 'No matter for that; go home.' 'I won't go home,' says I stoutly. 'I'm not wanted by old master, and I won't go home for any on'em else.' And now, my good friend, I'm glad you are come, for I'll take a cup of ale; and there's going to be another song, and so, let Satan tempt me how he will, he shan't get me to stir till I please."

Tom took a cup of ale; and tried to be merry. But in every pause between mirth and song again and again did he aver the warning voice seemed to say to him, "Tom, go home." At length Tom became so exceedingly uneasy that he started up from his seat, and exclaimed, with a vehement oath which we will not repeat, "I will go home!"

"Better wait for the rest of you, for your fellow-servants that be here. All will be returning to the Abbey by-and-by; better wait than go all alone by yourself," said his friend Raikes.

"Why wait for any one?" replied Tom. "There is something more in this queer thing than I can understand. Over and over again I'm solemnly told to go home, and go I will. Why should I be afraid to go?"

"Because it may be the tempter that bids you go," replied Raikes.

"I don't care. I will go home, even though I be to meet the devil himself in the way."

"You may meet as bad a thing," said old Raikes. He looked round, put his head close to Tom Wakeum's ear, and seemed as if afraid of his own voice as he added: "You may meet the SPECTRE HORSEMAN in your road."

"The what?" inquired Tom, with a look of amazement.

"The Spectre Horseman."

"What's he?"

"I don't know; Heaven only knows. But—but—come a little nearer."

Tom drew close up beside his friend.

"Have you lived so long at yon old Abbey and have never heard tell the tale of blood concerning it and the Abbot's Oak?"

"No," said Tom; "for when the maidens and the old folk tell over the fire about such matters, I never give ear to their idle stories."

"Idle stories!" exclaimed his friend. "Why, man, I tell you 'tis the real true cause, people say, why the heiress of the Abbey lives so far away from it over seas, and so lets it out to your master as tenant. It's a fearful thing for men to say."

"What's fearful for men to say?" inquired Tom, with impatience.

"Why, that so long ago as in the days of Bishop Brantingham, when the old monks at the Abbey were called canons—but I never could tell why they were called so—men do say that a man, one of they grim old monks, had a spite against his abbot, who was called William Beaumont, and so, watching his opportunity, one fine moonlight night, just such a night as it is now, maybe, he managed to waylay the abbot as he was a riding back home from a neighbouring lord's feast, and murdered him under the old oak-tree, the tree that is called the Oak of Blood, or by some the Abbot's Oak, in the forest. By what tokens I cannot tell you; but the tale goes that the murderer was penitent for his wickedness, and that after doing some great penance, as they call it, he had his pardon from the bishop. But here comes the terrible part of the story. It seems Abbot Beaumont's ghost was not well pleased that his murderer should thus have escaped the hanging he deserved; as from the time the bishop gave the murderer's pardon, the spirit of the murdered man could never rest. Men do say that about the full of the moon a spectre horseman still keeps the path between the Oak of Blood and the old Abbey, and that no man may go by that way unarmed. This is all I know, and it's enough. None of our people hereabouts can tell if the story be true by their own seeing, for not a mother's son of them would enter upon that way near the full of the moon were it to win King George's crown, or the Pretender's hope to get it. But when I was a boy,

I heard my father say that his father had seen the spectre in the forest. You see it was in this way—"

"I will not hear it," said Tom manfully ; "man, devil, spectre, shall not stay me ; for even while you were a speaking your very last words did the voice tell me again solemnly to go home. I will saddle my horse and soon be there ; and if all goes well, John Raikes, I'll be back again in less than half an hour, and I'll tell you what the spectre had to say to me this night in Hartland Forest."

Old Raikes shook his head. "It's no good," he remarked, "to jest on such matters. But I'll lend you a helping hand to saddle and mount ;" and he added, in a tone that seemed very much to imply that he expected nothing less than the reverse of his good wishes, "I pray you may come back again as safe as you go."

The horse was soon bridled and saddled with care. Tom furnished himself with a stout cudgel, instead of a whip, buttoned up close to his chin, refused another drop of ale lest he should not be quite self-possessed, and, bidding good-night to Raikes, set off on his homeward-bound course, as his friend pronounced a benediction for his safety.

For some time his way was pleasant enough ; the light of a fine moon gave though a solemn, yet not a cheerless, character to the landscape which lay as it were sleeping in silence around : a silence that was alone broken by the sounds of the fiddles and the pipe and tabor, with the mirthful voices of the harvest-home revellers. These sounds, however, gradually died away as Tom Wakeum distanced them by as quick a pace as he could prevail with the heavy and aged horse he rode to put on. At length he drew near the entrance of the Hartland domain, where he must of necessity pass the ill-omened wood, and that tree of terror.

There was something solemn and awe-inspiring in the valley at such an hour and under such circumstances: the profound repose, only broken by the stir of the boughs and leaves of the trees, the gentle plashings of the stream that ran along near his path, or the low and regular break of the surge, as the tide was flowing in, on the adjacent shore. The moon had now risen high in the heavens, and slowly and majestically glided on her way through the region of unnumbered stars, as the topmost boughs of the woods and every open space looked clear, bright, and silvery in all that calm and mystic beauty which no other hour and no other light



can convey. The mournful sweetness of the night breeze stole along the forest, and more especially harmonized with those portions of the scene where, from the thickness of the trees, nothing but a mass of dark foliage could be seen.

Full before him rose loftily, even above the wood tops, the towers of Hartland Abbey. Towards the north end they stood high in shade, showing only the grandeur of their outline in that broad dark bulk, which is ever so impressive in buildings, more especially when viewed during the obscurity of night. The front of the Abbey, where it was seen in the light of the moon, appeared cold, white, marble-like and solemn, giving no indication of inhabitation, except that through one of the latticed windows the far-spreading rays of a taper might be descried, burning like a twinkling star. Beyond the edifice, in the pale gleam which touched with exquisite beauty the wooded slopes of the hills, appeared the far-receding vale of Hartland. Above the whole swept the broad arch of heaven, now radiant and sublime.

Directly in front of the path which the determined rider was pursuing, in spite of traditionary terrors and his own secret fears, arose in fine contrast with the scene we have attempted to depict a rugged and venerable oak, far gone in years and decay, hollow in its trunk, bald at the top, and giving forth from its many shattered branches a melancholy sound to every breeze that wandered by. Some more vigorous and lofty trees which stood near so completely intercepted the light of the moon, that the oak lay before the path of the rider in deep shadow. Nothing but the outline of its vast and gnarled body could be seen; a mass of darkness. To the eye of a terrified fancy it might seem like the genius of the forest guarding the pathway that led from the Abbey through the most deep and lonely recesses of the wood. This was the Oak of Blood.

Tom Wakeum, resolute as he was, and not at all subject to imaginary fears, could not approach the spot without shuddering. But Tom was an honest fellow; he had a conscience at ease, and might therefore very well defy any spectre, whether mounted or on foot. He was determined not to give way to his fears, and so, wishing to cheer up his spirits by the sound of a human voice, and not liking the dismal sighing and moaning made by the boughs of the old oak, he disturbed the silence around by whistling the then prohibited Jacobite air of "Over the water to Charlie;" a thing more creditable to his courage than to his

loyalty to King George. His whistling, however, was soon stopped.

In the very height of his tune, he all at once heard a violent rush, as if something darted forward from another path that issued from an opposite point of Hartland valley, and passed under the oak. But who shall speak his feelings when in another instant he beheld in that part of the way beyond the oak which lay in the full light of an unclouded moon a figure, tall and cloaked, mounted on a horse that bore his rider with fury towards the Abbey gates ?

Now, whether it was that Tom Wakeum, who was really as bold as a lion in any moment of real danger, urged on his own steed to overtake the other, or whether, as is often the case, the one horse in violent motion excited the other to set off in emulation of his pace, we cannot say ; but certain it is, Tom's old sluggish hunter did no sooner see the other animal dash on before him than he followed with like speed, and came up to the Abbey just as the first runaway horse stopped before the gates and his rider fell from his back, as if spent and totally helpless.

Tom Wakeum leapt off his horse, ran to the assistance of the fallen man, and, as he bent over him, heard him exclaim, in a low voice of inward agony, "The Lord have mercy on my soul !" He looked at the fallen rider more closely, and examined his face, as the moon shone direct upon it.

"Good heavens !" exclaimed Tom, "it is my master ! Oh ! sir, what has happened ? Are you hurt ?"

No answer was given. Tom left Sir John Fairland for a moment on the ground, flew to the gates, roused the house within, and in a few minutes his master was carried into the Abbey hall.

CHAPTER IX.

"Thus o'er the dying lamp th' unsteady flame
Hangs quivering on the point, leaps off by fits,
And falls again, as loth to quit its hold."

ADDISON.

SIR JOHN FAIRLAND was removed from the hall to his own chamber, and laid gently on the bed. He was not dead, though speechless. A servant, mounted on the swiftest horse, was instantly despatched to summon the attendance of Mr. Tournequet, a young surgeon, who lived not very far off in the adjoining parish. In about half an hour he arrived.

It appeared that Sir John had received a wound in the breast from a pistol-shot, and in his paralytic habit (for not very long before he had had a slight seizure), either by the exhaustion arising from internal flow of blood, or from the shock the nerves had sustained, probably in some struggle, before he had been fired at in the forest, loss of speech was the consequence.

Mr. Tournequet extracted the ball, and a part of the wadding which stuck in the waistcoat, and had not penetrated the skin. Both the ball and the wadding the surgeon wrapped up with care, and put them into his own pocket, without making the slightest remark to any one present. He next desired to speak with Lady Fairland.

Her demonstrations of grief and anxiety were loud and excessive to such a degree that she would scarcely hear a word the surgeon had to say. Nevertheless, he compelled her to understand him, when he told her that no time should be lost in sending for the children of Sir John, who, the servants had informed him, were absent; for so great was the internal flow of blood, that the danger was imminent. He had done—he would do—all he could; but it was impossible he could say how long Sir John might survive; perhaps till the morning, perhaps not to the end of the present hour.

Lady Fairland having heard all he had to say, directed Tom Wakeum to go off in search of the party who were at the harvest-home. But Tom resolutely, sturdily refused to leave his

master, declaring that Heaven itself had called upon him that night to go home ; and that home he would not quit so long as his master should be alive. Lady Fairland knew well how impracticable a person Tom Wakeum was, and that it was in vain to argue a point with him when he had once made up his mind ; she therefore despatched another servant.

Sir John Fairland retained his senses perfectly, and by the motion of his head and hands, as well as by his earnest and expressive looks, made himself tolerably well understood. On his wife saying to him, in a cheering tone, that she was sure he would recover, and that he knew how distressed she felt on his account, he shook his head, and, as well as he could, motioned her to leave him. He then looked imploringly at the surgeon, as much as to say, "Take her away from me."

The surgeon urgently recommended Lady Fairland to retire, and leave Sir John to his care, and that of his faithful servant. But her ladyship, in a haughty and indignant manner, refused to quit the room, and, turning to Sir John, resumed the whining tone, and said, as she adjusted his pillows (for he had risen up in the bed with the help of Tom Wakeum), "I am sure, my dear Sir John, if he could speak, would not have me leave him for all the world. And indeed I could not do so, for when he was in health I made him promise me, and I promised him, if either of us was taken ill, the one should never leave the other for a moment ; and I certainly shall not think of breaking my word. You would not wish me—I know you would not wish me—to leave you, my dear husband ; indeed, I cannot go !"

Sir John turned away his head, as if in disgust, and fixed his eyes with an expression of great earnestness on the face of Tom Wakeum.

"What would you have, Sir John—what can I do for you, my dear master?" inquired Tom. "Only make me to know what you want, and I'll get it, though it be at the risk of my life. I have long loved and served you ; you have always been a good master to me, and I won't desert you now at anybody's bidding, be it who it may." In speaking the last words with his accustomed bluntness, he looked Lady Fairland directly in the face.

Sir John took Tom's hand, and by a feeble pressure seemed to acknowledge how sensibly he felt his fidelity and his affectionate zeal. He then looked straight forward, and pointed to his escritoire that stood opposite the foot of his bed.

"Master wants something out of his 'escritoire," said Tom Wakeum; "I'm sure he does. Don't you, Sir John?"

Sir John moved his head, as if in assent to the question.

"Nonsense!" said Lady Fairland; "to think of disturbing a dying man about the contents of his escritoire!"

"But I would suggest, madam," said the surgeon, "that there may be papers in it of the highest importance. These Sir John Fairland may wish to place in some trusty hands for the benefit of his children. I would strongly advise the escritoire being opened, and every drawer in it also, till Sir John makes a sign which drawer he would have brought to him."

Sir John bowed his head, as if in approval of what the surgeon had said.

"Nonsense!" again exclaimed Lady Fairland. "You will kill my husband with thus disturbing him. I will not have the escritoire touched."

"But it shall be touched though, and by me," said Tom Wakeum, seeing the earnest and imploring manner in which, with hands and eyes, Sir John motioned and looked towards the escritoire. In the extremity of his anxiety he even made an effort to get out of bed; but he fell back in the struggle, as Lady Fairland, with an affectation of kindness, placed her hands upon him to keep him in.

Tom flew to the escritoire—Sir John watched his movements with looks of intense interest. Tom made effort on effort to force it open; he even shook it till every drawer within rattled; but the locks were too firmly set; they defied him. He then declared that he would break it open, and ran to the chimney to take up the poker, when the door of the apartment was thrown open, and in stalked Graves. He looked pale, but cool and undismayed by the shocking scene before him.

No sooner did Sir John set his eyes on Graves than his features worked convulsively: and he made the most dreadful contortions in the vain effort to speak. His looks, his gestures, were expressive of the utmost horror; they seemed even to indicate a disordered state of mind; and once more he would, if he could, have started from his bed. Tom Wakeum and the surgeon exchanged looks.

Tom quitted the escritoire; one thought now alone possessed him. "Oh! sir," he exclaimed, "speak!—speak but one word, if you can—or make some sign by which we may understand you. Who is your murderer? *Is that the man?*"

"Scoundrel!" cried Graves, "leave this chamber—instantly leave it—or I will drag you from it by the throat."

"Two must go to that," said Tom coolly,—“you to do it, and me to let you do it. But you ben't worth my notice now. Oh! Sir John (turning again to his master), do make something like a sign that we may know the man, and, as there be a God above, I swear I will see justice done for the deed, though I should spend my last drop of blood to get it. Make but some sign!"

Sir John Fairland, who from extreme weakness had sunk back on his pillows, endeavoured to raise himself once more, but he could not. He next tried to raise his hand: it dropped like lead upon the bedclothes. Overcome by agony of mind and by the exertions he had made at the sight of Graves, his last moments were hurried on. The death-rattle seized him, his countenance changed to a dull white; he glared with an expression of horror on Graves, and in a few seconds the last struggles were over, and he sunk into the arms of death.

"Close down his eyes," said Lady Fairland, who was bending over him—"how they glare! I cannot bear it." And she instantly quitted the chamber.

Scarcely had Sir John Fairland breathed his last when his son Charles and his sisters returned to the Abbey, in a state of the utmost dismay. They had arrived too late to have the consolation of seeing their unfortunate father once more alive; and the dreadful nature of his death, with the circumstances of his last moments, every particular of which was related either by Tom Wakeum or the surgeon, aggravated their distress almost to distraction.

By the advice of the surgeon, a sensible and spirited young man, who had seen much and suspected more, Charles put his seal on the lock of the escritoire before he left the apartment.

He gazed affectionately on his poor father's remains, and after his sisters had done the same and kissed the cold lips of their unfortunate parent, he caused them to be removed scarcely in a state of consciousness from the chamber of death. So fearfully sudden had been the event, that they could hardly yet realize that their father had been murdered.

On the next day the first step taken by the son was to obtain an inquest. The coroner, the jury (composed of the first gentlemen the country round could produce), and many others from far and near crowded to the Abbey with offers of service

to the young baronet, now Sir Charles Fairland, on an occasion of such deep public as well as private interest.

Many witnesses were called, and the inquest was ably conducted by an acute and upright coroner. So minute and searching was the examination that it occupied three successive days.

The *escritoire* was opened by order of the coroner, and carefully searched. Nothing was found in it of any importance, except five hundred pounds, which it seemed Sir John had received not long before on account of the arrears of interest on some mortgage, and of his midsummer rents, as many of his tenants paid quarterly.

Mr. Richard Graves was very closely examined, and even Lady Fairland did not escape the shrewd cross-questioning of the coroner. But nothing appeared against either. Nor did anything come out in evidence to throw any light upon the mystery, except that there had been in the neighbourhood a desperate gang of smugglers, who had hitherto carried on their nefarious traffic with great daring and success. They had been known to run their boats and conceal cargoes in Hartland Cove, close in shore, and not very far from the Abbey. Some kegs of brandy had been left behind them when disturbed on some occasions by the revenue officers; and these had been found among the rocks by Sir John Fairland's people about a fortnight before.

Since that discovery, the late Sir John, having lost some heads of deer, issued warrants, as a magistrate, for the detention of three or four men strongly suspected as belonging to the gang of smugglers and deer-stalkers. They usually dwelt in huts near the sea-shore, and passed only for poor fishermen. Many persons were brought forward who deposed to various little circumstances (such as one of these men having been heard to say with an oath that he would send out a warrant for Sir John Fairland before Sir John could catch him), which when put together led to the very probable suspicion that these daring men (and none were more cruel or reckless than the smugglers and wreckers on the North Coast) had waylaid Sir John when returning unattended from the house of a friend. The jury long deliberated, and at last brought in a verdict, in consequence of which warrants were issued for the apprehension of James Wilson, Robert Williams, and Thomas Brent, on suspicion of being concerned in the murder of Sir John Fairland.

After the inquest was concluded, Sir Charles waited on his stepmother concerning the funeral. He was much astonished on being told that, by a will the old baronet had some time since executed, herself and Mr. Richard Graves were appointed his executors. After the interment, she said, his family should hear the will. All things considered, and to avoid that crowd which the great publicity of his death was likely to attract, she had determined to bury the deceased in the old chapel attached to Hartland Abbey ; and not to remove the body so far away as to the family vault in the church of the parish of Northleigh.

Sir Charles was indeed surprised ; but all remonstrance proved vain ; not a word he said was heeded, and from that day till the hour arrived in which, as chief mourner, he was to follow his father's remains to the chapel, he neither saw nor sought his stepmother or her fellow-executor, but purposely kept apart from them, devoting himself to the consolation of his afflicted sisters.

One piece of advice, which was thus given by Tom Wakeum, he most strictly adopted : " Sir, I don't believe the 'scritoire of old master is half searched yet. I do think there were some gimcracks of holes and drawers in it that the *crowner* and the gentlemen of the jury didn't go deep enough to find out, for I don't believe one bit that it was the five hundred pounds, as madam makes out, found in the 'scritoire, tho' a heavy sum, that made poor dear master so cruel disturbed to get at his 'scritoire when he was on his death-bed. But you had better let my lady and her chum think you are satisfied it was so. Howsomever, do you seal it up again, and one day when you are all alone by yourself have a hunt over, and see carefully if all the drawers have been opened and examined ; and as it is a delicate sort of a piece of furniture, if you can't easily get at 'um, take the poker."

Sir Charles Fairland took his seal ring from his hand, and very carefully sealed up again every lock of the *escritoire*.

CHAPTER X.

"A glorious remnant of the Gothic pile
 (While yet the church was Rome's) stood half apart.

* * * * *

But in the noontide of the moon, and when
 The wind is winged from one point of Heaven,
 There moans a strange unearthly sound, which then
 Is musical—a dying accent driven
 Through the huge arch, which soars and sinks again ;
 Some deem it but the distant echo given
 Back to the night wind by the waterfall,
 And harmonized by the old choral wall."

BYRON.

THE last painful scene was still to be gone through. Sir Charles Fairland prepared to meet it with seeming fortitude, as on the day of the funeral he had not only his own spirits, but those of his sisters to support ; for at the date of our narrative it was the inconsiderate, if not the unfeeling, custom to expect the attendance of the nearest female relatives as well as the male on such an occasion. The daughters of the deceased, therefore, were to be present in the chapel.

The circumstances of Sir John Fairland's death had excited so much interest in the neighbourhood, and were so much the public talk, that it was apprehended a very great concourse of people—notwithstanding the comparative privacy of burying in the chapel—would be collected to witness the ceremony. As a further means of insuring privacy, therefore, the two executors changed the hour of interment, and directed that it should take place at night with no more state than was absolutely indispensable.

The evening of the appointed time set in with a melancholy presage. The ocean was in gloom, gleams of a pale, cold light were seen upon it, and the gathering clouds began to lower. The sun had set over the valley of Hartland, and the woods gradually darkened around, as the tenants and the few persons invited to attend the solemnity arrived at the Abbey, habited in long cloaks and scarves of black.

It was between the hours of nine and ten in the evening

when the mourning train issued from the gates to cross the court that led to the ancient chapel within whose consecrated precincts the interment was to take place. The procession was certainly impressive. The servants of the household walked first, two and two, each bearing a lighted torch. Next came the officials of the ceremony, with banners and achievements. The coffin followed, covered with a black velvet pall that was supported by eight neighbouring gentlemen. Immediately after walked Sir Charles Fairland, as chief mourner, followed by such other male mourners as were akin to the deceased. The deeply afflicted daughters came next, with the females of the household. Lady Fairland, however, was not present ; she was said to be greatly indisposed. The tenants and inferior servants closed the train. Such was the pomp of the time, that this, though including more than seventy persons in attendance, was deemed a very small funeral for a man of Sir John Fairland's rank and fortune.

There was something peculiarly solemn and impressive in the ceremony and its accompaniments. The chapel had been neglected for many years. An interment had not, perhaps, taken place in it since the dissolution of the Abbey at the Reformation. From time and disuse the walls were damp, and in some places moss-grown. The roof was in bad condition ; the clustered columns that supported it, and formed the division of the aisles, were here and there twisted with ivy, and many of the capitals broken and partially fallen from want of repair ; whilst the vaulted and richly fretted roof itself had afforded a shelter to the bats and the night-birds, which, now disturbed in their "solitary reign," darted from their abode, and flew about on agitated wings above the heads of the mourning train. Many of the windows were without glass, or retained it only in fragments. The great east window, however, was tolerably perfect, and still exhibited by day those deep and glowing hues that were once the pride of Gothic art in buildings sacred to Christian devotion.

The whole of the interior looked dark and dreary, and as the torches threw strong but partial gleams of light on pillar, vault, and arch, they did but render more distinct the ruin and neglect into which the chapel had been suffered to fall, and increased the awe that accompanied its decay. Through the broken windows might be both seen and heard the lofty and aged trees that grew without, waving in the night-breeze, and murmuring dirge-like sounds, as if to add their voice of wailing to the circumstances and solemnity of the hour.

As Sir Charles Fairland passed under the Gothic portal that gave entrance to the chapel, he shuddered. The gloom before him, not yet dispelled by the slowly advancing torch-bearers, had in it something of mystery, apt to raise in the mind presages akin to superstitious fear. Such a scene of obscurity and desolation struck him to the heart, and the thought arose in him that it was a fit resting-place for the murdered—a murdered father, whose destroyer was yet undetected, and his blood unavenged. The grave was to the left, beneath the east window, and near the altar of the chapel. Immediately above the excavated spot, within a niche of the wall, stood the ancient carved figure of St. Nectan, the Martyr, to whom the chapel was dedicated. The martyr, in the attitude of expiring by a violent death, with raised head and hands, seemed to be calling on Heaven to witness and avenge his murder.

The figure, the attitude, the coincidence, was not lost on Sir Charles Fairland; he felt a chill of horror run through his veins, as he again and again thought of his father's fate; and as the words, "Ashes to ashes, dust to dust," were being pronounced whilst the corpse was lowered into the ground, he breathed a secret and impassioned vow that he would leave no means unattempted to bring the murderer to justice.

All was ended; he cast one look of deep interest upon the coffin ere the earth covered it for ever, and then retreated from the scene in silence and in fear, supporting his weeping sisters, and vainly endeavouring to appear calm, lest he should aggravate their affliction; nor would he that night hear the will which was offered to be read to him. He could do no more than request the friends who had come far and late to pay the last sad duty of respect to his father, to refresh themselves and remain till the morning at the Abbey. Few, however, accepted the invitation, and the old house was soon left to a darkness and a silence like that of the tomb.

We will not trouble the reader with a full recital of the will of Sir John Fairland. It was such as might have been expected from the date it bore; it was made at the time when the two executors, Lady Fairland and Graves, were at the height of their ill-gotten ascendancy over the mind of Sir John, and whilst using their utmost art and malice, and the most cruel system of falsehood, to poison his mind against the children of his first marriage, more especially his eldest son Charles.

There is nothing more easy than by telling a true tale falsely, distorting some facts, and passing over others unnoticed, to make

the innocent appear the guilty to a prejudiced mind ; and this was the course which the conspirators—for such they were—had adopted in their misrepresentations about his children with Sir John Fairland. It is almost needless to add that the circumstances to which we have alluded occurred some time previous to that eventful interview between father and son, which ended in a manner so satisfactory to both, as far as their feelings and convictions for each other were concerned.

The principal points in the will were these :—only five hundred pounds were bequeathed to each of the three daughters of the first marriage. All the most valuable estates (none being entailed) were left to Abraham, then a boy at school, the son of the second marriage. To his sister Elizabeth was given three thousand pounds, and to Mr. Richard Graves, for his trouble as executor, one thousand pounds ; to Lady Fairland, ten thousand pounds, with (this was, perhaps, one of the most extraordinary clauses ever heard of in a will) all the personal effects of “ whatsoever kind or description ” that might happen to be contained in Lady Fairland’s chamber, commonly called the *Wathet Chamber*, at the time of the testator’s decease. And to Charles John Fairland, the eldest son, was left all the remainder of the estate, both real and personal, as the residuary legatee.

This sounded well ; but, on examination, it was apparent that the bequest had been made merely for the sake of appearance in the eye of the world ; for the residue proved to be nothing more than the worst of all the landed estates, a very small, poor farm, and about fifteen hundred pounds in money, with all the old pictures, worm-eaten books, tables, and chairs, and beds, that had been removed to Hartland Abbey, and did not happen to be placed in Lady Fairland’s chamber at the time of Sir John’s decease.

All comments on such a will are needless ; the whole country cried shame, and some of Sir Charles’s friends advised him to dispute it in a court of law. But honest Lawyer Noland shook his head at this piece of advice, and told Sir Charles that, unjust as the will might be, it was legally drawn and without a flaw. Abraham, though a younger son, was legitimate, and as Sir John was in his perfect senses, and in sound health in every way at the date of the instrument ; as he had also been heard to threaten with disinheritance his eldest in favour of his second son, he feared nothing but the loss of the little property Sir Charles might possess, in an expensive lawsuit, would be the

result of an appeal to a court for justice. Counsel's opinion was taken, and being given to the same effect, all thoughts of any legal steps to set aside the will were abandoned.

The unfortunate young baronet, half broken-hearted at the sense of the injury he had sustained, remained fully convinced that after the memorable interview he had with his father but just before his death, had he not died so suddenly and by such foul means, the discoveries he had made about his wife and Graves would have caused him to make another will, and one of a very different nature. He determined, in the bitterness of his disappointment, to sell the paltry estate left to him, to remove what might be his by his residuary legateeship, to demand the payment of the five hundred pounds for each of his sisters, and the fifteen hundred for himself, and then with as little delay as possible to quit Hartland Abbey for ever.

He also consented, as it was their wish, to leave his sisters under the care of Mrs. Elford, with whose small means they desired to unite their own, and so to live all together under the same roof, at least for the present. For Sir Charles himself, as his beloved Isabella was willing to share with him his broken fortunes, he proposed that they should unite their hands in marriage, leave England, and retire to an obscure part of the Continent till such time as he could enter upon some honourable employment, in the hope by his own exertions to raise those means which were denied him in right of his family, his birth, and his expectations.

This plan Sir Charles attempted putting into practice; but obstacles and delays were still thrown in his way by his father's executors, and it was whilst smarting under these vexations that the following scene occurred at Hartland.

"Mr. Graves," said Sir Charles, with warmth, "I am glad I have encountered you, in order to repeat that demand which my solicitor, Mr. Noland, has already made in my name and in the names of my sisters, the payment of the paltry pittance which you and our stepmother suffered my father to bequeath to us. We wish for immediate payment; and, sir, it will be your interest to comply with our request, as we shall then trouble you no more. I ask this with temper; do not drive me to extremities, to force from you a compliance with our just demands."

"Sir Charles," said Graves, "this is very strange language. Lady Fairland is an executor as well as myself, and she must be

consulted. The law allows an executor more time ; we cannot be hurried."

"Do not talk to me of what the law allows," replied Sir Charles indignantly ; "for if justice had its course, where would you stand at this hour ? where the woman who is at once your confederate and your destined prey ?"

Sir Charles looked Graves full in the face as he spoke this in a high and impassioned tone. The villain quailed before the searching eye of the injured son, as truth in the accents of irritated feeling burst from his lips. Grayes trembled, for a moment the colour left his cheeks, and his whole countenance turned to an ashy whiteness as he stammered forth : "Sir Charles Fairland, I do not understand behaviour such as this. If we delay paying you and your sisters your fortune, it is for your benefit, and for that of the young ladies. We find that you are about to enter into a very imprudent marriage as soon as you are paid ; and as for your sisters, Lady Fairland thinks that for the present they will be much better under our protection than any other."

"Do not," exclaimed Sir Charles, "do not profane the name of my injured sisters by even hinting at such guardianship for them as that of yourself and Lady Fairland. I can read your purpose ; you grudge even the paltry bequest that is made to them ! You protect them ! Lady Fairland protect them ! As soon would I commit their innocence to the keeping of the vilest wretch, who makes a traffic of the innocent, as I would leave them in such foul and guilty hands as those of yourself and your paramour, the widow of my poor deceived father !"

"Sir !" said Graves ; "sir, this is beyond endurance. I—I shall demand satisfaction for such slanders cast on me and on my honourable mistress."

"Demand it, and take it," replied Sir Charles ; "the satisfaction of facing me in a court of justice, where slander may be traced to its true source. But think not that, in defiance of the laws of God and man, I would peril my life to fight with a low-born villain. Sir, I am a gentleman by birth and education, though you, by your arts, have scarcely left me the means to be such in fortune. Nor would I do my poor sisters so great an injury as to hazard my own life, and thus to leave them exposed to your and Lady Fairland's protection !—protection that would be such as the fiends give their victims, whom they serve only to destroy. But I will no longer bandy words with you, who

have neither honour nor shame. Answer me this—will you or will you not, comply with my demand ?”

“Do you first answer me, Sir Charles,” said Graves, with an impertinent air, “and tell me by what authority your servant, that insolent Tom Wakeum, has this morning been directing, aiding, and abetting the loading of sundry carts with some of the old family portraits and other matters belonging to the late Sir John Fairland, and removing the same from this Abbey to the house of your attorney ?”

“I remove these matters,” said Sir Charles, “because I have a right to them and a respect for them. They are principally the portraits of my forefathers ; and you and Lady Fairland have left me little else to show that I am well descended. And more than this, I would preserve even the very shades of my ancestors from keeping house with those who have combined to bring ruin, as far as they could do it, on the elder-born descendant of their blood. My friend, Mr. Noland, will receive and hold them for me in safe keeping for the present ; they are mine by right.”

“By right, Sir Charles,” said Graves, scarcely knowing what he said, “how by right ?”

“Oh ! Mr. Graves, by the right of that residuary legateeship which you and my stepmother so kindly permitted my father to bestow on me.”

“Sir Charles,” said Graves, in his confusion contradicting himself, “you do me great injustice. I do not dispute the right to that residue, which you so much despise, and by which all the personalities of this Abbey will be yours, all except the contents of one chamber.”

“Oh ! sir, I know it ; all except the contents of the Watchet Chamber ; and as Lady Fairland there keeps all the plate and jewels, and whatever is of most value, I am most exceedingly obliged by the exception. I had not forgotten that part of the plot.”

“Nor have I forgotten, Sir Charles,” said Graves boldly, “that when I passed your door just now I heard your servant, Tom Wakeum, giving orders to some of your people to remove the escritoire that was Sir John Fairland’s ; that, Sir Charles, belonged to the Watchet Chamber. It was only moved out of it, by the request of Sir John, a week or so before his death ; it may, therefore, be considered as belonging to it. I, as executor, shall detain the escritoire,”

"At your peril do so; at your peril lay but a finger upon it. That escritoire was in my father's own apartment at the time of his death; it is now mine, and I will keep it. I shall remove it from this house, and no man shall hinder me."

"We will see how that matter goes," said Graves. "Sir Charles, this is a fresh injury to the widow of your father."

"Talk not of my injuring the widow of my father," said Sir Charles passionately. "Oh! too well did he know the fatal truth; too late did he learn to know the woman who had been as the blight and the deadly blast to the fair promise of his children, till, grown bold and confident in sin, she brought beneath his roof a villain worse, were it possible, even than herself, to destroy the peace, the sanctity, the security of his home! And now that villain dares to brave his eldest son, the heir of little more than his injuries and his name."

Graves stood riveted to the spot, unable either to answer or to retreat from these impassioned reproaches. For although Sir Charles was of a generous and forgiving nature, yet, when smarting under the stings of such insolent treatment, his mind became inflexible, and he resolved at every risk to accomplish the objects he had in view.

Graves had made a great mistake in his estimate of the young baronet's character when he fancied, because he had seen him little more than passive under the most cruel neglect, that the ease and goodnature of his disposition indicated weakness of mind. The truth now flashed upon him, and he felt how unequal he was to cope with so spirited an adversary. But Graves was hardened in iniquity, and every just, reproachful word cast upon him did but provoke his malice, till at length, maddened by the scorn and the taunts of Sir Charles, and angry with himself that he knew not how to retort, he stood trembling with impotent rage, as his eye glanced upon his opponent with fiendish vindictiveness.

"My father knew you both," continued Sir Charles; "ay, both, though unhappily not long before his death. He knew your wiles, detected your machinations, and that between you you had made his honour your sport. He knew this. But my own suspicions are of more fearful import. Most vehemently do I suspect that you obtained some knowledge of the discoveries he had made, and of his purpose to discard the false wife from his bosom and the false steward from his house, and that you anticipated his just resentment, and prevented it. Ay, sir,

scowl upon me, raise the hand and clench it; I care not. Truth is great, and will at last prevail. I do suspect that my father had foul play, and by your means! If I am wrong in my suspicions, may my sin be forgiven in the greatness of the provocation; but if right, may God yet bring the hidden thing to light! And may the murderer of my father quail before the eye of public justice, as you, sir, ay, you, now quail before mine."

Sir Charles Fairland turned away as he spoke, and left Graves fixed on the spot with the characters of terror impressed on every feature of his face.

CHAPTER XI.

"But soft, behold ! lo, where it comes again !
I'll cross it, though it blast me—stay, illusion ;
If thou hast any sound or use of voice,
Speak to me !"

SHAKESPEARE.

"VERY foolish," said Lawyer Noland, as Sir Charles Fairland related to him, almost immediately after it had taken place, the particulars of this stormy interview with Graves. "Very foolish, indeed, on your part, to let your angry passions thus run away with you. My dear boy, you should have preserved the utmost calmness with Graves ; you should have been civil to him. I fear that by your vehemence—even as you tell me was the case with your poor father in his scheme to detect Graves—I fear you will spoil all, spoil the snare that I am spreading to catch the villain ; and that he may be off, instead of walking into it. My plot works capitally ; I have my men on the lookout everywhere. The revenue officers are also in my interest ; they hate Graves for having certainly protected some of those desperate smugglers, and, as it is reported, for having supplied them with powder and shot to make that bold stand when one of the revenue men was killed the other day in the fray on the beach.¹ Strong motives must a man of Mr. Graves' position and expectations have—for all men say he boasts that he is to marry your Lady Fairland—strong must be his motives for protecting a gang of smugglers so desperate as these ; but more of this anon. That escritoire must be moved to-night. I must have the searching of that myself, with your leave."

"I fear Graves will gain possession of it," replied Sir Charles. "I am most desirous that it should be searched by you. How must it be moved ?"

"I will tell you," said Noland ; "I will send one of my own people ; he shall go for it with my cart. That will take Graves

¹ At the date of this tale the nefarious traffic of smuggling was carried on, both on the coasts of Devon and Cornwall, with the most extraordinary daring.

by surprise, and Tom Wakeum can help to remove it. No time must be lost ; for, like you, I think there is something suspicious in Graves so insisting on retaining it, and your father's anxiety to come at it in his dying moments confirms the suspicion. There must be something of vast importance connected with that old escritoire."

"Yet I can assure you," replied Sir Charles, "that except the five hundred pounds, which the coroner handed over to the executors after the inquest, there was nothing of any value in it."

"Nevertheless," said Mr. Noland, "I advise its being secured and searched. I will give orders about it forthwith ; the men and the cart shall go off for it directly. The portraits are all safely arrived ; a goodly set of grandfathers. Come with me, my dear fellow, and I'll show you where I've stowed them ; and then you shall go with me to my closet, where I will lay before you some notes that I have made of this affair of the smugglers—they contain a few curious discoveries ; and the plan I have drawn out for our further proceedings ; that is, unless you have marred all by this foolish quarrel, and, as I said but now, the scoundrel sets off before I can catch him. But, after all, I think the bait up at the Abbey—the widow and the gold—is too strong to be lost sight of by such a shark."

"I know not what to think," said Sir Charles, musing, as if engaged more with his own thoughts than with the plans of his friend.

"What to think !" said the lawyer, taking up his last words in a cheerful tone ; "why, Sir Charles, always think the best and hope the best. But come, cheer up ; you are in low spirits. Never mind the dark hour of fortune ; it will be bright by-and-by. You must stay and cut your mutton with me to-day ; a delicate leg of Okehampton with a bottle of old Tokay to give it a relish, and we will drink a health to the fair Miss Isabella and better times to us all. I shall never forget the day when I first heard of your being thought of before you were born from the lips of your poor distressed mother, and how on that day I helped to make the peace and to prevent a separation. But now do I earnestly hope I may, at last, effect a divorce between your father's lands and his second wife's children. But no more of this now ; come along with me. I have hope. But if all goes wrong, and things come to the worst, we must even take patience to help us."

So saying, Mr. Noland led the way. Long and deep was the

conference. Sir Charles and his adviser were closeted for more than three hours, and finally called in to their counsels a very intelligent officer of the revenue, who was to play an important part in their proposed measures. In the interval we will, in a few words, tell the result of Mr. Noland's scheme for the removal of the *escritoire*.

A rascally footman, a well-paid tool of Graves, soon made his master acquainted with the arrival of a cart and only one man with it, who with the assistance of Tom Wakeum had placed the *escritoire* safe in the same cart, adding that Tom had afterwards set off with a letter which Sir Charles strictly charged him to deliver himself into the hands of Miss Fitzwarren.

Graves thus ascertained that the man and the cart were ready for departure, and that Tom Wakeum was off his post. Now it so happened that Mr. Graves, for purposes of his own, was removing some of his personal effects to a small house he had recently taken in the neighbourhood. Some said he did this for appearance, that he might not live under the same roof with Lady Fairland till his marriage entitled him so to do. Be this as it may, he bethought himself of a scheme to obtain possession of the *escritoire*; for he, like Sir Charles, entertained a strong suspicion that it must be something of more importance than the five hundred pounds deposited therein, which had so disturbed the dying moments of his late patron. He was therefore quite as anxious as Lawyer Noland himself, though from a very different motive to enter on a search. Determined to take decisive steps in the affair, he gave instructions to his informer to invite the man who had the charge of the cart to drink before he departed with his load, and vowed, that if his emissary did not make the fellow drunk on the spot, he would discharge him for a bungler before the next morning. The rogue went willingly enough to do his master's bidding; whilst Graves lost no time in summoning to his secret counsels another of his agents, and one of a suspicious kind, who was in attendance at the moment. What was then the nature of the conference it is not here necessary to relate; it will be known in due time and place; but for the present we must turn to a scene of a very different description in the progress of our narrative.

Towards the evening of the same day in which these matters occurred, a man of a short, stout figure, a steady and determined countenance, plainly habited in a thick gray surtout, was seen lingering about the coast near Hartland rocks. Every now and

then he applied to his eye a telescope, such as are frequently carried by naval officers when walking the deck of their vessels. He was evidently on the look-out. After a while he proceeded to Hartland Point, that bold projection of headland which, as we have before noticed, was called by Ptolemy *The Promontory of Hercules*. The ascent to it, like that of Tintagel in Cornwall, is by a very narrow pass, extremely steep and rugged. The wind was violent as the person we have named ascended; but after he had with much difficulty reached the summit, he found it calm on the point.* On this spot was already laid a quantity of wood and dried furze, as if ready to be lighted for a beacon.

This great and bold promontory of the north coast stretches itself into the sea, and is united to the land by a causeway, narrow, broken, and so steep in parts as to be almost perpendicular. The angry and reverberating waves beat on either side, close to its very base. It is at once an object of terror and sublimity; to a depth that makes the brain dizzy, the eye looks down upon splintered and sharp points of rocks that rise up below like spear-heads.

The coast around is of the noblest character, long and far-extending, composed of cliffs of the wildest and most romantic forms, and here and there intersected with many a nook and cove; in some places lines of low black rock, and the surge breaking over or covering them with sheets of foam, as the tide rolls in with irresistible force, produces a striking effect both on the eye and ear.

The ocean, when seen from this headland, is an object of extraordinary grandeur, the horizon having the appearance of great elevation, the whole sweep of the mighty belt so simple, yet so sublime in its simplicity, an image of power living and moving and full of awe. On the evening of which we speak it was silvered by partial lights, and here and there overcast by the deepest shadows. On the ledges of the surrounding cliffs, perched on their points, were many of those wild birds which, cradled in the rocks and nursed amid the storms, become

* "This calm on the summit of the point is occasioned by the wind striking against it being thrown upwards, so as to form an arch overhead, defending it, as it were, from the horizontal current. This was proved by our throwing over some chips which happened to be on the spot, and which, instead of descending, though thrown with strength, ascended with a rotatory motion above our heads in the form of a curve."—From MS. notes of a tour on the North coast of Devon and Cornwall by the late Reverend E. A. Bray.

familiarized with the ocean. Others soared high, and presented their white and airy forms with outspread wings in contrast to the dark and angry clouds, "fast gathering round both sea and shore."

The man with the telescope stopped on the summit of Hartland Point, and took a careful survey in every direction, and then closed the instrument. Indeed, the gathering twilight would not have allowed it to be of use much longer. Somewhat distant from the shore appeared a small vessel whose white and swelling sail was labouring to waft her through a turbulent and rolling sea.

No sooner did the man on the look-out perceive her than he took flint and steel from his pocket, and ere the rain which threatened could fall to prevent his purpose struck a light and fired the beacon. The flame rose brightly without being even in the slightest degree blown from its upward direction, for not a breath of the wind, that was rushing violently above, touched it.

A faint cry arose from the vessel below, and was heard by the man who fired the beacon in a momentary pause of the blast. The cry seemed to be taken for an answer to his signal ; he at once commenced his retreat, and with a slow and labouring step, often compelled to stand still till some sudden gust had passed and allowed him to go forward, he made his way over the narrow causeway which unites the promontory with the mainland.

The sun now set, and the twilight of a summer sky was rendered dull and heavy by the gathering storm. The edges of the clouds, tinged with reflected light, were of a fiery red, the ocean became every moment more and more agitated, and the breakers made all the shore one sheet of boiling foam. The high and impending cliffs, darkened by the sombrous clouds, sent forth hollow moans or shrill sounds from the force of the winds among them, whilst the lofty woods of Hartland and the deep and rocky recesses that lay around the valley were half hidden in the obscurity of the hour.

This was succeeded by a night of rapid and striking change. At one moment all was total darkness, and the next, as the fast-scudding clouds passed away from the moon's disc and left her unclouded in her majestic course, her light silvered the tops of the forest-trees, and showed distinctly the antiquated and clustered towers of the Abbey standing loftily above them, in

some parts illumined with partial splendour, in others wrapped in night and gloom.

Such was the scene and the hour when there passed through the forest two men, the one mounted and the other on foot, leading by the head a horse which drew a small cart laden with something of bulk. For a while they continued their course in silence. They made a pause, however, as a deep and low peal of thunder rolled hollowly in the distance, indicating that the threatened storm was at length come. There was a momentary calm: this was followed by a strong and loud rush of the wind, as it swept along the woods and tossed high in the air the boughs and branches of the trees; whilst the open spaces that lay around became visible as the first vivid flash of lightning gleamed upon the ground.

"I do not like this, James Wilson," said one of the men to his companion, "nor the place we have to find, nor the errand we go upon. It's an awkward job if we are interrupted, and our men may want us, and wonder what keeps us away when there's a cargo to be run; they may want hands."

"And a pretty night they have for running it in," said the other; "unless the boats are hove up in the cove, I would not give a button for the cargo; it will all go down to Davie Jones's locker. Our men will have a hard pull, I fancy, against wind, tide, and sea, to make the cove. I doubt if all goes well; but be it how it may, I wish I was with them; for I tell you, Bob, thof I'm no land-lubber, I don't like the place we have to pass—don't like it at all, nor the stories about it that go round the country. I wonder why I agreed to do to-night that fellow Graves' errand."

"Why, because you could not let it alone; that's all," said the other man to whom he thus freely spoke his doubts and fears. "Graves out with his purse and showed you the chinkers, and *that* did the business. Don't you grumble for the job, for you've had your pay beforehand; I've had only promises."

"But he's always a crossing your palm with something better than coppers, Bob," replied his associate. "You're his man in constant pay, I'm not; and I don't like such a job as this we are upon, when we have to pass near that infernal oak in the forest."

"Hush, hush!" said his companion; "the Abbot's Oak, you mean. Don't call it infernal, or the Evil One himself

may come up to let you know he's ready to take what you call his."

"I had rather see him there than what I hear tell of," said James Wilson.

"The Spectre Horseman, you mean," said Bob Williams. "Why, man, that is because you are chicken-hearted, and a greenhorn. The Spectre Horseman is the best friend we have in the forest. He has stood guard over my kegs, I will warrant you, many a night, when we have left them in these woods, under the old oak-tree; well knowing, as we did, that not a mother's son of them, all the neighbourhood round, would dare go near the place for their very lives. Not even a revenue man would go near it; he'd shake in his shoes like a man at the foot of the gallows if he did but come within pistol-shot of the Abbot's Oak. But as for the thing itself, don't be afraid of it; the story's of no good whatever but, as I said before, to protect our kegs and contrabands."

"Well, so you say," replied Wilson; "but that don't satisfy me."

"Well, then, your own eyes will soon," said Robert Williams, "for we shall be at the Abbot's Oak in less than ten minutes, if the animal here will but put a better leg forward; he's got no such great weight to draw, to be so sluggish. But what a cruel night is this for our people!"

Again was the scene around involved in darkness, the clouds driving thickly before the face of the moon. With great difficulty the men made their way among broken and fallen branches, tall grass and brambles, and the high knotted roots of the trees that encumbered the narrow and little frequented path they were pursuing. Once the cart was nearly overturned, and twice they paused, thinking they heard some one near at hand. At length the thunder, "that deep and dreadful organ pipe burst over the forest in a peal so tremendous that it seemed to shake the very earth beneath their feet. The lightning gleamed, and then utter darkness fell again like a pall over the woods. The winds moaned in strong and awful cadence; again and again did the heavens seem to open to send forth a stream of fire, and forked flashes quivered along the ground.

There was something very fearful in this rapid interchange of light and darkness. The men paused, as if overcome with awe by that sublime fury of the elements which is as "a token of God directing His world." Once more they endeavoured to

make their way through the intricate path that was before them; and slowly they drew near the decaying lord of the forest, the oak, which stood in sombre mystery, half seen and half obscured, as the stern and watchful guardian of the woods.

At this moment the moon was more in mist than in shadow; a succession of thin vapoury clouds like a veil, through which her orb could be distinctly seen, were scudding before her; there was obscurity, but not darkness. And whilst surrounding objects thus appeared somewhat in mist, the men—the one who led the horse by the head, and the other who rode near—were much startled by the led animal standing stock-still, shaking in every limb, as if in the agony of fear; whilst the other horse started with so much violence that he nearly threw his rider, then reared, then backed as much as he could from the pathway, and shook and foamed with terror.

Before the men could interchange a word, a figure seemingly taller than of human height, mounted on a horse of due proportions, passed rapidly before the oak; neither form nor feature could be distinctly seen. He wore a hat that appeared to be slouched over the face, which was turned towards them. He seemed to each of the men as if about to rush upon him, yet they were some distance apart from one another.

Wilson had resolution enough to speak; no answer was returned, and in another second the phantom rider shot by the oak, like an arrow from a bow.

"Where is he gone?" exclaimed Wilson.

"To hell, from where he came," replied his ruffianly companion, "for not a living creature is now to be seen in the pathway down which he rode. Yet I could not see which way he turned; did you?"

"No; I did not."

"It must be the Spectre Horseman," said Williams. "But what noise was that?"

They paused and listened. A low but shrill whistle was heard in an opposite quarter of the forest to where the mysterious horseman had appeared and disappeared.

"We are trapped," said Williams; "those are the revenue men, or I am much mistaken. They are on the look-out. Here, Wilson, mount behind me; leave the horse and cart. The officers will fancy that the old lumbering piece of furniture it contains is a cargo of contrabands, they will fasten on it, and we shall gain time to get off. Here, give me your hand; mount

quickly, for we shall have an old score to settle if we are caught. Mount and away."

Wilson forthwith jumped up behind his friend ; and they set off at as hard a pace as the animal could be urged to by the repeated blows and kicks laid into his sides. Whilst the thunder and rain rolled and rattled above their heads a few of the revenue men (stationed that night on the look-out purposely to intercept any of the smugglers passing through the forest) reached the fatal oak ; not, however, in time to secure the rogues for whom they were in search, but soon enough to take possession of the cart and the luggage it contained. This they did at once ; and how they disposed of it will be seen in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XII.

"Thou'st done an evil deed,
For sin is of the soul, and thine is tainted."

MATURIN.

LIKE our old friend harlequin, who in our childhood used so to raise our wonder and delight in the pantomimic scene, when by the wave of his marvellous wand he changed land and houses into sea and ships, we must claim a privilege no less fanciful, and at once transport our readers to an old house, not one so ancient or so picturesque as Hartland Abbey, yet quite old and curious enough for railroad tourists and sketching young ladies to visit and "take off," as the Devonians say, if it be still in being.

This house was the property of Charles Noland, Esq., attorney-at-law, and a very honest man. Mr. Noland, as we now introduce him, in its most spacious apartment, was seated in somewhat of that state in which we once before saw him on the expected separation between Sir John Fairland and his lady. On the present occasion there was a solemnity about his manner and deportment that argued a case of high importance was in hand. Sir Charles Fairland, with three or four county magistrates, and several other gentlemen were there assembled. The much talked of *escritoire* was there also, and the ancestors of Sir Charles, moved only a few days before to the custody of Mr. Noland, stood, some in armour and others in full-bottomed wigs, leaning in their frames against the wall, there having yet been no time nor place found to hang them: they seemed on this day to have met together to be the silent witnesses of a cause of the utmost importance to the last eldest-born heir of their honoured line.

The beadle and constable of the parish (both offices being filled by one and the same man) was present, several of the revenue people likewise, and others of less note. Certain men in custody were held apart in an outer chamber, and others ready to be produced in evidence before the magistrates, as the circumstances of the inquiry might demand.

Mr. Noland rose and opened the case. His speech was long

and weighty, every word and every sentence duly considered; and whilst he addressed the magistrates, he every now and then assisted both his memory and his eloquence by reference to certain notes he had made for the purpose. The opening of the case occupied a full hour ; we shall only give the pith of it.

Mr. Noland began by stating that, in consequence of a certain deadly affray which took place on the beach near Hartland Cove about six weeks before, in which a man named Robert Williams (assisted by others) had feloniously slain one of his Majesty's revenue officers, a warrant had been issued by the late Sir John Fairland to apprehend these persons, who were likewise suspected of being deer-stalkers, and of having killed many head of deer in Hartland Forest. Now it appeared by credible evidence that the aforesaid Robert Williams, whilst somewhat off his guard, through the effects of drink, had dropped threatening words, intimating that he would despatch the late Sir John Fairland ere he should be apprehended under the warrant which Sir John had issued for his detention.

Here Mr. Noland paused, and then, with a more solemn aspect than he had yet assumed, proceeded to say that it had pleased God, who bringeth every secret work into judgment, to make known the circumstances just related, yet but as the beginning of certain discoveries that had rapidly followed. He need not remind the magistrates present of what had taken place before the coroner on the inquest of the late lamented baronet, inasmuch as the documents of the whole of those proceedings were before them. He would only say—and here the worthy attorney paused and took snuff, to assist his modesty in sustaining the little compliment he was about to pay to himself—he would only add that ever since he had been employed on that memorable occasion he had used his most unremitting and zealous efforts to discover the perpetrators of the murder. Day and night had he thought with intense anxiety upon the most likely means of detection ; and he was both proud and happy in being able to state that the measures he adopted met with the approbation of the magistrates, also the thanks of Sir Charles, and the attestation of his own conscience ; for he assured the gentlemen there present, that though for more than thirty years hackneyed in the ways of the law, he still possessed a conscience—it had been his best reward.

Again Mr. Noland paused ; and now he changed his attitude, and stood with the right leg a little forward, the left drawn

back, his head raised, his notes in his left hand, and his right gracefully stuck in the bosom of his cut-velvet waistcoat, between the top button-hole and the third from it—an attitude in which he had seen the celebrated Lord Chesterfield stand, in the House of Peers, as he uttered his famous tirade against Sir Robert Walpole when he seceded from his party. Ever since Mr. Noland had adopted the attitude in question when he wished to give peculiar force and effect to what he said.

He then proceeded to say that he had received information from an individual in his employ that a very large cargo of contraband spirits and goods was to be landed at Hartland Cove on the first stormy night, when it was considered the officers of the revenue would be less alert ; that a certain signal was agreed upon to give notice of the precise time when this could be done with the greatest safety. For this purpose a quantity of wood was to be set on fire on Hartland Point. This intelligence Mr. Noland ascertained to be correct, and deemed it of such importance that he lost no time in communicating with the officers of the revenue, and agreed with them to set a trap for the smugglers.

It was arranged on the first tempestuous day to withdraw all the revenue men from their posts, on the pretext that in such weather no smuggling boats would venture to run a cargo into the cove. Mr. Noland's informant gave him the hint that a good portion of the contrabands was to be taken to the Abbey for the service of Lady Fairland and Mr. Graves, who were long-established patrons of these men ; having by their means drank their claret and worn their foreign velvets and silks duty free.

In consequence of this information, and a well-arranged plan of the revenue officers, on the evening of the previous day, the weather continuing to be stormy, the spy in their employ had been sent to light the beacon. The smugglers fell into the snare, landed the cargo, and were surprised in the very act of doing so by a strong armed force concealed amongst the rocks and hollows near the shore.

Further, in order to detect any persons of the said gang who might be in connection with any one at the Abbey, it was arranged that a small party should be stationed at a certain point in the forest near the tract that led to and from the coast. There the officers, in the first instance, failed in their plan, for two men belonging to the gang escaped ; but a cart and horse,

and something they were feloniously removing—the same being the property of Sir Charles Fairland—had been secured, and the two fugitives, not knowing their associates were captured at the cove, and having gone forward to join them, fell into the hands of the revenue officers, and were now also in custody.

One of these, James Wilson, seeing how desperate matters stood with him, on the assurance that his life would be spared, offered to turn King's evidence respecting a very serious matter. In consequence of his deposition, taken before a magistrate, a warrant had been issued to arrest a certain person, whom he (Mr. Noland) now directed the constable to bring before the bench.

The worthy attorney sat down, took his hand from his bosom, wiped his face with his handkerchief, and seemed somewhat exhausted by the length and earnestness of his speech. A murmur of approbation ran through the room. All present seemed wrought to a high pitch of curiosity and expectation, that sank into the silence of astonishment, not unmixed with fear, when, the door being opened, Graves was brought in a prisoner, between the constable and two or three armed men who had assisted in the arrest.

On entering, Graves looked round him with an insolent and hardened air, as if determined to put a bold face on the matter and to brave it out. He walked at once up to the table at which were seated Sir Charles Fairland and the other gentlemen, and with a high tone and haughty demeanour asked how they had dared issue a warrant to arrest him, who was their equal in rank and character, and what they had to lay to his charge.

The presiding magistrate, a formal old gentleman, very coolly replied, "Pray, Mr. Graves, do not give way to angry feeling. Pray do not be thus excited. You will have a full and dispassionate hearing by-and-by. Pray, sir, be seated. We are gentlemen, and would wish to treat you as such. Sir, the laws of England consider every man as innocent till he is proved guilty. Do not, therefore, fancy we would anticipate justice. You are entitled to the full benefit of such laws; and these worthy and upright magistrates here assembled, and representing his Majesty's person, would wish you to receive not only the advantage of those laws, but the courtesy of the bench. Gentlemen (turning to the bench), do I not speak your feelings?"

The magistrates, one and all, gave their assent by words and

tokens of approbation ; a most singular method of proceeding, but at the date of our narrative the irregularity of a bench of country gentlemen was notorious. But the courtesy shown to Graves did not induce Mr. Noland to flinch one iota from the severity of his examination, nor from bringing forward the evidence which he had collected with great shrewdness and unwearied zeal. We go at once to the more serious and important part of the charge.

"Gentlemen," said Mr. Noland solemnly "believe me, it is with unfeigned concern on Mr. Graves' account, as well as on account of the feelings of Sir Charles Fairland and all here present, that I am about to adduce evidence and examine the same on a most fearful, most awful charge against the gentleman in custody. He is suspected of having devised and caused to be carried into effect the murder of the late Sir John Fairland."

Graves did not raise his eyes to meet those of Mr. Noland, but he turned pale. He retained, however, his self-command, and said in a quiet manner, "Suspicion is no proof ; a charge so dreadful as this must be made good, or must altogether fail."

"It must be so, indeed," replied Mr. Noland, "and I am glad that Mr. Graves at once takes it in its true light. He may be sure he will have justice. Pray, Mr. Tapum," he added, turning to the constable, "pray give me the green bag which lies yonder on the side-table."

The constable handed it over, and Mr. Noland fumbled in it for a few minutes. At length he produced a very handsome silver-mounted pistol. On seeing it, Graves exclaimed with fury, "Who has dared to seize my property ? That pistol was at my bed's head but yesterday !"

"It was not seized without a magistrate's warrant," said Mr. Noland, "enabling the officers to search Hartland Abbey, and to lay their hands on whatever might be deemed necessary towards investigating the charge in question. This pistol is known to be Mr. Graves's ; Sir Charles Fairland and others can depose to its being such. I must not put any questions that it might be injurious for Mr. Graves to answer in respect to his own case. I must not ask him where is the fellow of that pistol. I have it in this bag."

Mr. Noland opened it again, and now produced a second pistol, silver-mounted, and exactly corresponding in the maker's name and every other particular with the one already exhibited,

differing only in this, that whereas the first was bright and in high order, the last produced was covered with rust, and looked as if its beautiful workmanship had been defaced by damp and ill-usage.

"Gentlemen," said the attorney, "one of my officers found *this* pistol at the bottom of an old pond, which I caused to be dragged, situated not very far from the Abbot's Oak in Hartland Forest. This pistol is the companion of the one known to be that of Graves. I have two witnesses belonging to the household of the Abbey who will prove that *both* pistols were seen in his chamber a day or two previous to the murder of Sir John Fairland, and only one of them has been seen there since that fatal event. Tapum, call forward Mr. Tournequet, the surgeon who attended Sir John Fairland in his last hours."

The surgeon deposed to the wound by which Sir John met his death being one from a pistol-shot. He then produced the ball he had extracted, and showed that it exactly fitted the pistol taken from the pond. He next produced the piece of wadding which had stuck in the waistcoat of the deceased, and had not passed into the body with the ball.

Most carefully did Mr. Noland unfold this, and lay it open on the table before the magistrates. "Gentlemen," he said, "I must now call your attention to a most important piece of evidence. I must beg the closest attention to the circumstance about to be adduced."

Once more did Mr. Noland resort to the green bag, and produced a packet very carefully tied with pink tape and sealed. He directed the constable to take it and break the seals. This ceremony was accordingly performed by Mr. Tapum in solemn silence.

"Gentlemen, the papers now about to be produced," continued Mr. Noland, "were taken by the officers from a private drawer in Mr. Graves's bureau, which stands in the closet adjoining his chamber at the Abbey."

Graves frowned, but said nothing, knowing that all remonstrance concerning such seizure of his goods and papers would be fruitless.

"Gentlemen," continued Mr. Noland, "the first thing that I produce is an old newspaper, *The London Mercury* of the 20th of April of the current year. Gentlemen, you perceive that a piece has been carelessly torn off from the corner of this newspaper. You will also perceive that the fragment which

formed the wadding of the ball that shot Sir John Fairland exactly corresponds with the tear." Mr. Noland then placed the two pieces together; their union was perfect, wanting only a very small portion.

Graves became exceedingly agitated, and exclaimed with fierceness that his pistol had been stolen from his chamber, and must have been thrown into the pond by the thief. It was injustice, it was madness, to suppose him to be answerable for a piece of an old newspaper which he declared he did not so much as know was in his possession.

One of the magistrates advised him not to enter into particulars, but to reserve his defence either in reply to the present charge when concluded before the magistrates, or for a higher court, when the case would be in the hands of his counsel.

The pistols, the ball, and the wadding were once more carefully restored to the green bag, as matters of evidence. And now Mr. Noland called on Sir Charles Fairland to come forward.

Sir Charles rose from his seat; strong emotion appeared in every line of his fine and expressive features as he looked on Graves with a feeling of horror that was almost sickening.

"Mr. Graves," he said, "I know that in addressing you I am acting somewhat irregularly; but I wish to assure you that, whatever may be my own thoughts or sufferings at the sight of one who stands accused of having cut short the days of my father, I will endeavour to restrain myself. I will endeavour to follow the example of my friend Mr. Noland, and in seeking justice to seek it calmly and temperately. These papers which Mr. Noland but now handed over to me, I understand, were found by him in making a more particular search than had hitherto been made in my lamented father's *escritoire*. Mr. Noland discovered certain private drawers, so closely constructed that none but a man of his nice observation would have detected them."

"Pardon me, gentlemen," said the old lawyer; "I do not know that I should have detected them any more than Sir Charles, had I not remembered a certain *escritoire* that was once the property of my great uncle. It came from abroad, and was of curious construction. I had often, when young, seen its secrets disclosed. On the death of the original possessor his widow sold many of his choice pictures and rare pieces of foreign furniture, among them this very *escritoire*, which must have been purchased by Sir Charles's grandfather, old Sir Thomas Fairland. The moment it came into my charge I suspected, and at

length recognized it as the acquaintance of my youth. A very little time and care in the examination of it brought to my remembrance the secrets of its curious construction. The papers Sir Charles now holds in his hand were the firstfruits of my search."

"Those papers," said Sir Charles, "must have been deposited in the secret drawers of this escritoire by my father himself. How he came by them he could alone have told; that they produced the strongest effects on his mind may be traced in the few but impassioned remarks that he wrote in pencil on more than one of them. They are letters addressed by Mr. Graves to my stepmother. Their contents show the existence of a most extraordinary confederacy with her, and that it was of some standing. In these papers Graves also glances at the hope he entertains of one day becoming her husband, should death take the old baronet, as he calls him, out of the way. He also tells her his fears that, in consequence of my father beginning to think better and more kindly of me and my sisters than heretofore, he may be led to make another will; and unless this can be prevented, it will be a hard matter for her and her two children, as well as for Mr. Graves himself. In another letter he speaks in terms of hatred and contempt of my father—and wishes him out of the world. I will not offer even a remark on such ingratitude, such baseness. To God and to the laws of his country do I leave Mr. Graves, certain that an all-seeing and all-righteous Judge, who vindicates His truth even here, will never pass crimes such as these unavenged."

Sir Charles sat down, greatly moved. He returned the letters to Mr. Noland, who, according to their dates, read them aloud to the magistrates, together with the comments of the late Sir John Fairland. The papers were then placed in the green bag, as evidence for a future day.

Graves, who had some talent, but far more effrontery, with a hardened brow and resolute air, observed that there was nothing in those letters that could support the capital charge made against him. In alluding to the death of Sir John Fairland (a man getting up in years and somewhat paralytic) his meaning was obvious—that, in case such death occurred, he should have no objection to marry the widow, who was likely to be a woman of good possessions. He then, with the utmost coolness, asked if Mr. Noland had done with him, or if he had anything more to bring forward.

"Only one other witness," replied Mr. Noland, and calling the constable aside, he whispered in his ear. The official left the room, and soon returned, bringing with him a man of a very rude aspect, his beard and hair black and matted; he was dressed in seaman's clothes, worn and tattered; altogether he had a wild and disordered appearance. His cap was in his hand, and he walked directly to the end of the table.

"James Wilson, your Worship," said the constable.

At hearing this man named, Graves, who hitherto had sat with looks cast on the ground, raised his head and started as his eyes met those of Wilson, who now turned towards him with a dogged air, as a sort of inward exultation seemed to express itself in a play of the features the most sinister and insulting. It was the more striking as, under ordinary circumstances, the countenance of Wilson was stern and immovable in its fierceness. Graves turned pale as death at the sight of this man, his eyelids quivered, a tremor passed over his whole frame, and a slight involuntary motion of the lips showed how strong was the shock he had experienced. In the surprise of the moment he ejaculated his name—"James Wilson!" but after that maintained a silence which seemed to result from his confusion of mind, not knowing where to turn or what to do at so unlooked for a crisis. He composed himself, however, to hear with almost breathless attention every word that followed during the examination of this witness.

Wilson was far more the master of himself, and seemed perfectly indifferent as to who questioned him, his chief care being his own safety. All preliminaries past, he proceeded to give his evidence in a clear and consistent manner, and said nothing that laid him open to any very close cross-examination. He admitted he had belonged to a gang of smugglers, and that he was present at the fray on the beach when the revenue officer was killed, but declared that he had no hand in taking his life. As to the business of Sir John Fairland, it was altogether another thing.

"You knew, then, that an attempt was to be made on the life of Sir John Fairland?" said Mr. Noland; "how did you know it?"

"Mr. Graves there first spoke to me on the matter; but I didn't like the job, and so he gave me a guinea, sent me away, and said I was to think no more about it, and he should do the same."

"And how did you know that Mr. Graves afterwards proposed it to Robert Williams, as you last night declared he did?"

"Robert Williams," continued the witness, "often takes a cup too much, and when he does so he is apt to talk. He told me that Graves had told him of the warrant which Sir John Fairland had issued to take him on the score of killing the revenue man with his cutlass; and, moreover, that Sir John swore he would never let the matter rest till he had Williams hanged for the business. He said that Mr. Graves had worked up his blood against Sir John, and advised him to be even with him before he should be taken and could not help himself; and that he gave him five guineas, and bade him waylay Sir John Fairland in the forest and shoot him. When Williams made answer that the lock of his own pistol was broke, Graves offered him one of his, so he would but do the job out of hand; and told him, to make all safe after the thing was done, he had best throw away the pistol in the deep pond."

It may seem strange, indeed, that hearsay evidence such as the above should for a moment have been admitted. We think it right, therefore, to state more fully than we have already done that at the date of our narrative country magistrates were, generally speaking, very different from what they are at the present time; not only hearsay evidence, but even the most irrelevant was frequently received before them with the utmost attention, and as matter of no less importance than testimony bearing directly upon the subject under investigation.

All the circumstances, therefore, which James Wilson declared he heard from Robert Williams were noted down with the utmost alacrity. All eyes turned on Graves, who, hardened as he was, evidently quailed at the perilous position in which he stood, as evidence on evidence rose up against him with all the force of truth. Nevertheless, he still preserved an unbroken silence, probably thinking it best to do so after the hint Mr. Noland had given him, not unadvisedly to betray himself.

The magistrates and Mr. Noland continued their inquiry. One old gentleman, who deemed himself particularly skilful in such business as the present, asked Wilson to declare openly what motives had induced him to come forward as a witness. Wilson replied that his principal motive was his own safety, which he knew would be secured by turning King's evidence. But he admitted he had a grudge against Graves, who paid him,

he said, "like a niggard for some fine Genoese velvets, and for some of the best claret wine he ever got on shore, which he had run at the hazard of his life." He allowed he had no reason to wish Graves should be spared, yet repeated that was not the cause of his now coming forward against him.

On being further questioned very closely, he let fall some expressions by which it appeared that his suspicions of Graves and Robert Williams being the murderers of Sir John Fairland had preyed on his mind; but what had decided him to come forward and tell all he knew was a thing he did not like to speak about. He felt sure something not of this world had crossed him in the forest; he was certain it had come upon him because he had such a secret in his keeping. Ever since the hour that terrible thing, be it what it might, had crossed him in the forest he had made up his mind to speak out, let the consequences be what they would.

All this was drawn from Wilson with some difficulty, so great was his reluctance. He seemed half afraid and half ashamed to confess that a strong superstitious feeling possessed his mind. The chief, therefore, though not the only cause of the voluntary deposition of James Wilson was that he had seen, or fancied he had seen, the Spectre Horseman.

The evidence closed. Mr. Noland again rose from his seat, and intimated that he had another and most important subject to bring forward, which he thought bore collaterally upon the case. At all events, whether it did so or not, he could no longer keep it back, as it was one he could wish should be publicly known, and he felt assured that all there assembled would receive the communication with heartfelt satisfaction.

"Sir Charles Fairland," he said, addressing the young baronet, "allow me, in the presence of God and of these honourable men, to place in your hands a document which I also discovered in the secret drawer of that escritoire so much the object of investigation. It is a WILL, a very short one, but clearly drawn and duly executed; it is in the handwriting of your father. The instrument is dated but a few days before his death. He states in brief but strong terms that he has discovered the truth—the plots and machinations by which his wife and Mr. Graves raised in his mind such prejudices against the children of his first marriage as induced him to well-nigh disinherit them. He says that, in case anything should happen to him before he could make a more full and formal will, he

writes the present with his own hand. In it he gives everything, land, money, plate, jewels, all to you, his eldest son, Charles John Fairland, with a request that you will provide for your own sisters, and as you may think fit for the offspring of the second marriage. Lady Fairland is not even named amongst those to be provided for at your discretion. All here present will, I am confident, unite with me in rejoicing that the eldest son of the house of Fairland has thus been put in possession of his rights, and that with the title and honours he will inherit the estates of his forefathers."

The magistrates, and all the gentlemen assembled, with the warmest expressions of sympathy congratulated Sir Charles on the discovery of the will.

He was much affected as he thanked them, and added : "Indeed, Mr. Noland, grateful as I am to Providence for this good turn of fortune, I feel not the value of the thing itself half so much as I do the proof that my father gave at the last of his revived affection, not only for me, but for the memory of my dear mother. It is this which must plead my excuse for the strong feelings that at the present moment unman me"—he turned aside and wiped the tears from his eyes as he spoke.

Mr. Noland resumed : "I do not imagine that Mr. Graves knew of the existence of this document ; but his own letters addressed to Lady Fairland, and discovered by Sir John, show that he feared the execution of some such will. And as Thomas Wakeum has deposed that Mr. Graves knew as well as he did that Sir John was much engaged at his escritoire for several days previous to his death, Mr. Graves might fear that a will contrary to his own wishes was deposited somewhere therein. To no other circumstance can Mr. Graves' determination to retain the escritoire be ascribed."

Here the case closed. Graves was called upon to state anything he might have to say in his defence. But probably finding the evidence too clear against him for his own unskilful comments to shake it, he only replied that he should put the cause of an innocent man into better hands than his own to defend it, and sank again into sullen silence, and so was committed to take his trial for life or death.

What remains may be briefly told. Justice was not robbed of her due. Robert Williams being secured on the day of the examination, he, with Richard Graves, was tried and capitally convicted ; but only he suffered the last penalty of the law, for the wretched

Graves anticipated his just reward, being found dead in his cell the day after conviction, with every evidence of poison. No one knew, nor was it ever ascertained, by what means he became possessed of the drug which destroyed him. Thus, indeed, was the murder of Sir John Fairland most fearfully avenged.

Sir Charles, with that warmth and generosity which had ever marked his character in all the trials of his past life, bestowed on each of his own sisters a very handsome portion ; he also provided liberally for the brother and sister of the half-blood ; and by placing them under the care of qualified persons to give them a good education, and far removed from the pernicious example of their guilty mother, did more for them in the end than he had previously done by the gifts of worldly fortune.

Lady Fairland, no longer young and attractive, and with none of those virtues or that intelligence which render age amiable, or even respectable, disappointed in all her hopes and schemes, and struck with a late and ineffectual remorse, found her life a burthen almost too heavy to be borne. Sunk in her own eyes, pointed at by the finger of scorn, and hated by all the world, she wished only for the grave wherein to hide her dishonoured head, and yet feared that last rest of the miserable because of a hereafter, which her own conscience presented to her in a terrible light.

In this state she became more an object of pity than of anger with Sir Charles Fairland. The generous never bruise the broken reed nor quench the smoking flax. He sought her, settled upon her an annuity sufficient for comfort and independence, and gave her good counsel, together with his father's copy of the Holy Scriptures. Soon after this he sent a worthy clergyman, a particular friend of his own, to talk with her, in the hope of leading her mind in the right way, and inducing her to seek better prospects with better feelings than she had known in the days of her pride and prosperity. Sir Charles likewise promised that, whensoever he could feel assured that her repentance was confirmed by a consistent life in the paths of virtue and religion, he would allow her the comfort of occasionally seeing her children.

For Sir Charles Fairland himself, as soon as his affairs were settled, and he had returned to and taken possession of Northleigh Hall, he wrote in affectionate terms to Mrs. Elford, and solicited her consent to his union with her niece. With a reply

from the good aunt, he received also a letter from his beloved Isabella, confirming by the promise of a speedy gift of her hand the happiness he had already known in the possession of her heart.

Mr. Noland proceeded to draw the settlements according to his instructions with his accustomed precision. Feeling very uncomfortable at the prospect of living so far apart from his godson and friend (whose worldly welfare had been so much his own work), he considered the subject well, and bethought him whether he could not in a way of his own become a member to the family, and once more return to the neighbourhood of Northleigh Hall. Mrs. Elford, the aunt of the fair Isabella, was very good-looking, fat, pleasant, and not too old, a person of much sense and an excellent manager, making the penny go far and well. She was a widow, Mr. Noland was a widower ; neither of them had any children. The old lawyer took a week to consider the several points of the case. Whether or not he consulted his favourite authority, Judge Blackstone, on the occasion we cannot say ; but certain it is, he bought a new wig, got his coat and shoes well brushed, and attired himself with more than his usual care. Then, taking in his hand his late father's gold-headed cane—a thing he so respected that he never used it except on state occasions—he clapped on his lace three-cornered hat, and sallied forth to pay his duty to Mrs. Elford. She happened to be at home and alone.

What passed at that meeting has not come down to us. But as Mrs. Morton, who was still alive and well (and by a good legacy from a wealthy relative in much improved circumstances), was consulted about a wedding-suit for Mrs. Elford, second only in the richness of the brocade and the elegance of the trimming to that undergoing the process of the fashioning and the decorating for her neice, Miss Isabella Fitzwarren, suspicions, conjectures, and reports began to circulate very freely. Some of the old maids, and of the young ones, too, who envied the prosperity of the fair Isabella, went so far as to say that Sir Charles had changed his mind, and was going to take the aunt instead of the niece to wife.

At length, however, the whole truth became apparent, when on the same day in which Sir Charles Fairland led to the altar his youthful and lovely bride Mr. Noland conducted his comely and somewhat more staid lady to the same sacred place of meeting. Both were married, and both were well pleased with the

objects of their choice. On that grand day, also, Mrs. Morton, who was growing old, and who had been persuaded to let the wedding-dresses be the last produced under her superintendence in the way of business, entered on the honoured and important duties of housekeeper and family friend to Sir Charles and Lady Fairland.

Tom Wakeum, seeing that marrying made his young master and his old counsellor look so very happy, thought he would try it as well as his betters, and so he looked about him for a wife. There was a good-humoured cook at Northleigh Hall—and very good-humoured must the woman be who would keep her temper cool and unchanged when exposed to the daily roasting of herself, like her joints, before such a fire as that which blazed in the kitchens of Northleigh Hall a hundred and more years ago. Well, on this worthy person Tom Wakeum cast an eye of favour, and one day asked her, very civilly, would she take him for better or for worse. The mistress of the spit and ladle did not say no; and therefore, without more courting or ceremony, on that same day he put in the bans, and his marriage was followed by his own elevation to the dignity of house-steward.

Of the superstition concerning the Spectre Horseman, whose marvellous appearance, it was reported, helped to bring such mighty things to pass, we can give a less clear account, or rather no account at all that will be deemed satisfactory. Some amongst the more knowing said that he was a human and a living being, who, connected with the lawless, only assumed the character of the supernatural in order to keep the path in the forest (consecrated by a wild tale of tradition) clear at night for the service of the smugglers. But most men, and among them certain of the grave and learned of the time, were of a very different opinion.

In short, the appearance, of whatever kind or order it might be, was held by the generality not to be of earth, but of something far below it or beyond it; even of the unseen and mysterious abode of the departed whose shadowy forms, man cannot tell wherefore, are occasionally, though rarely, permitted to revisit the earth, yet never to reveal the secrets of their awful and impenetrable abode. Be this as it may, that such a spectre did haunt the woods of Hartland near the old Abbey, one of whose superiors had there met with a violent death in the days of monastic rule, was a superstition devoutly credited even in

the early part of the last century. No wonder, therefore, that in those days many among the peasantry, and some of the more educated classes, were so impressed with the apprehension of it, that not for their lives would they have passed the Abbot's Oak after dark, for fear of meeting the Spectre Horseman.

ROSETEAGUE.

ROSETEAGUE.

PREFACE.

ROSETEAGUE, in the county of Cornwall, situated in the district of Roseland (thus prettily called on account of the quantity of wild roses growing on the briar of the hedges), for generations was the seat of an old country family named Kempe. But, like many other residences, it changed masters, being sold during the latter part of the last century by the "good Justice Kempe," as, on account of his charities, he was commonly called in the neighbourhood. There it was generally understood that he sold the estate in consequence of the injury his fortune had sustained by his devotion to the cause of the Pretender, Charles Edward Stuart.

The original mansion which fronts the sea a short distance from the beach, was of very ancient date ; it was partially if not entirely rebuilt, in the time of Elizabeth, in the form of the letter E, a compliment then frequently paid by architects to the Maiden Queen. The taste so common in the eighteenth century for removing heavy mullions and small panes of glass, in order to obtain more light, caused the old windows of the house to give place to modern ones, when the Gothic porch was also removed. Much of the timber of the domain, about the same period, was subjected to the axe, but enough remained to render the grounds very delightful.

A tradition existed of certain underground apartments of very ancient date, that had been used for refuge or escape in the Civil Wars, and even so late as the last century had afforded shelter to a mysterious individual during the political troubles of the time. A no less remarkable tradition, connected with Roseteague, existed concerning the fate of a youth named Tregidior. The singular interest attached to this story was one, though not the only, motive for the writer visiting Roseland and the family of the late Mr. Cregoe, of Trewithien. That Cornish gentleman was an excellent antiquary, and familiarly acquainted with all the history and traditions of his native county. He it was who related to the writer the story about the youth, which was also related to her by a woman in humble life, Constance Behenna, then in the 92nd year of her age ; she was called by Mr. Cregoe, "Our living Cornish chronicler." She said that, when a girl, she knew the mother of Tregidior.

In a preface to some former tales the writer of the present stated that many descendants of some of the most ancient families in Cornwall and Devon had kindly sent her "anecdotes, narratives, or traditions connected with themselves or their forefathers, for the express purpose of affording her a groundwork of truth on which to raise a superstructure of fiction in relation to the Romance of the West of England."

The present is a narrative of this class. She has further to mention that as closely as the subject would admit she has abided by the tradition concerning the fate of the youth, but the tale, as far as it relates to the heirship of Treville Crewse, is founded on some remarkable circumstances that occurred in Cornwall during the middle of the last century, the scene of which, in some instances, has been placed at Roseland. These circumstances were communicated to her by a clergyman (since deceased) of great literary merit, who was a native of the county, with an earnest request that she would avail herself of them in one of her West of England tales.

Lest injustice should be done to the memory of a good man,

it is proper for the writer to state that the character she has drawn as the occupant of Roseteague at the period of her tale is one very different from the worthy justice who at that time resided in the mansion. The liberty she has taken is, she believes, one conceded to the novelist. She forbears to say more, as she would not wish to injure by anticipation the interest which she hopes the reader may find in the story of Roseteague.

A. E. B.

Brompton,
8th September, 1873.

CHAPTER I.

"Yes! when thy heart in its pride would stray
From the loves of its guileless youth away,
When the sullying breath of the world would come
O'er the flowers it brought from its childhood's home;
Think thou again of the woody glade,
And the sound by the rustling ivy made;
Think of the tree at thy father's door,
And the kindly spell shall have power once more."

MRS. HEMANS.

I AM the last male descendant of a very old and, I may with truth add, a very respectable family in Cornwall. We trace back our descent, in a direct line, as far as the Conquest; when Louis de Ardenell, on receiving from the Norman duke certain lands in the west of the conquered island, erected for himself a castle, and finally settled in the county of Cornwall. My mother's family was also of foreign extraction, though of more recent date in connection with England. A younger son of the noble house of Treville in France married a Devonshire heiress in the reign of James the First, and settled in the county, where his lady brought him large possessions. In my time a branch of the Trevilles still existed on the Continent, and one of the members was a zealous friend of the exiled House of Stuart in their repeated attempts to gain the Crown of England. We were so proud of our connection with this noble family that for many generations the eldest son (on the side of my maternal ancestors) was always christened Treville. Such was the case with my mother's father, Treville Crewse. With me it was different; I was called Francis, and Treville was but my second name.

Honourable as unquestionably was the family from which I sprang, my father, Mr. John Ardenell, was but a poor member of it. But I shall not trouble the reader further with his history than to say, that though he had a good practice in the law at the town of Launceston, where he lived, he never grew rich, and, dying suddenly, left my mother with two children,

myself and a sister, with a very narrow income for our education and support. But as our mother was careful and content, and we were trained in the school of frugality, our small means proved to us no very great hardship, and our little domestic circle was cheerful, orderly, and happy.

I was early placed at the Grammar School of my native town; yet the most impressive part of my education at this period, I may truly say, was received at home. My mother had an old domestic above the common class, who held a station between that of a menial servant and a familiar friend,—a position in the days of which I write frequently assigned to the family nurse. Such was old Dinah. She was faithful, affectionate, and thoroughly Cornish. Intelligent and abounding in the richest stock of stories and traditions of her native county, she was as credulous and superstitious as any of the ancient Druids or British hards could themselves have been; with whom, no doubt, a good deal of her traditionary lore had its origin.

I was a proper subject for Dinah's legends to work upon. Never shall I forget the impression they made on my boyish fancy; and as my mother—who was herself imbued with the true superstitious spirit of the west—listened with great attention to her tales, it is not surprising that almost from my cradle I believed in all the apparitions, pixies, fairies, signs, and omens, and what not, that form such a catalogue of wonders common to the county of Cornwall. Even at this distant period I can distinctly recall the countenance and manner of old Dinah, as she sat over the fire of a winter's night, and whilst she turned her wheel or knitted her stockings, raised her large dark eyes from her work, fixed them on my face, and with a slow voice and solemn air commenced one of her many tales. My seat was usually on a low stool on the opposite side of the hearth, where with eyes and ears wide open, wrapt in immovable attention, I often felt a thrilling sense of fear steal over me, while nevertheless I sought with the utmost eagerness the gratification of my excited fancy.

Above all, old Dinah delighted to tell me stories of that great hero, born at Tintagel, Prince Arthur, and of the no less famous magician, Merlin, to whom, though commonly reputed Welsh, Cornwall lays claim as the place of his birth. And often did Dinah give me a caution to beware what I did in the way of schoolboy exploits, lest I should bring myself within the power of the great evil spirit of the west—Tregagle.

"Beware of Tregagle, my dear boy," she would say, in a voice of solemn warning; "he is the enemy of all that is good, and is ever at work for death or mischief. You need not fear him whilst sitting over the fire in your mother's warm parlour, with two candles burning and the Bible in the room. But you would not like to meet him any more than does the poor labourer, as he comes home from his work and hears the echo of his howlings among the hills; for he it is who wrecks the vessels on this cruel rocky coast of ours, and sails with the clouds, and calls up the storms, and all for destruction."

And then would Dinah take up another subject, and finish the evening with some especially favourite tale about the witches, black and white, of the neighbourhood; and would close by sending me to bed under the influence of the terrors she had raised.

After being for some years at the Grammar School of my native town, I was fortunate enough to obtain an exhibition at Oxford, where, in accordance with my mother's earnest desire to see me, however poor, in the ministry of the Church, I followed my studies preparatory to holy orders.

I will not dwell on the period of my college life; it was marked neither by novelty, brilliant achievement in the schools, nor by adventure of any kind. As soon as I was old enough to take holy orders, I was so fortunate as to obtain a title for a very good curacy of thirty pounds a year, in a village so near my native town that it would enable me often to see my mother and my sister, who had no other male relative living, and looked to me at all times as their natural protector.

After spending a few weeks at home, I received a letter from the bishop's chaplain, directing me to be at Exeter at such a time for examination previous to the ordination of his lordship.

The day arrived for my departure. My mother and sister busied themselves in a thousand little preparations for my journey. Our old man-servant, Thomas, was to attend upon me and ride the family hackney, which frequently bore him and his mistress seated behind him on a pillion, when she sallied forth on any little expedition of charity beyond the reach of her feet. I was to ride my own nag.

Whilst the horses were saddling and our Dinah was taking care to stock the pockets of Thomas with some little matters for his own special comfort, and was giving him many cautions respecting the dangers of the road, we in the parlour were upon

our knees. My mother, after earnestly beseeching Divine Providence to guide my steps in safety, in the heavenly way I was now about to pursue, rose from her knees, embraced me affectionately, and, as the tears stood in her eyes, said,—

“Remember, my dear Frank, in whose service you are about to engage. Remember that God demands the whole heart. Better never put your hand to the plough than look back. And when the widow and the orphan knock at your door, think you see in them your mother and your sister, and your own heart will tell you what are their sorrows, and what you should feel for their distress.”

It was yet early day when I quitted my native town; and as the roads were bad, the hills steep, and the way long, I proposed to bait our horses at a little inn near Gressonbridge, so performing the first stage of my journey that I might reach Tavistock by sun-down, and there rest for the night. My choice of this road was made because it was considered safer than the other, on which, but a few evenings before, the coach from Exeter to Falmouth had been robbed by a gang of desperate highwaymen; and though a road was generally considered safe immediately after any great robbery, yet I did not venture upon it, as my mother had drawn from me a promise not to do so.

The morning was fine; I had health and youth to welcome it, and soon experienced its cheering effects. For in youth mere existence is a pleasure; especially when listening to the morning song of the birds, inhaling the freshness of the breeze, sweet with the fragrance of herbs and flowers, as the dew lies glittering upon them like the diamonds of our Cornish mines. The road to Gressonbridge was bold and striking. Very few, if any, mines lay near it. There was no scar on the bosom of that beautiful country to mar the work of nature, which is sure to be disfigured wherever the bowels of the earth are ransacked for the profit of man, by the destruction of every green thing, and the display of heaps of rubbish or unsightly machinery.

Here hills clothed with wood, meadows of the brightest verdure, animated with flocks and herds, were seen on every side, whilst the river Tamar pursued its course, meandering placidly through the valleys, where many a romantic glen, skirted by upreared rocks and aged oaks, beautifully diversified the scene. For several miles, through the openings of the view and towering above every other object, appeared that still im-

posing relic of British origin, the lofty mound and keep of Launceston Castle.

I came at length to a very old house by the wayside. A sign, rudely depicting the castle, suspended above the porch, intimated to the traveller that the house thus distinguished by this effort of primitive art was one of public resort. From an early age I was a lover of antiquity. Perhaps I owed my taste for local antiquities to old Dinah, whose stories concerning our town and its castle in the time of the Civil Wars had made a deep impression on my youthful fancy. The dwelling I was now about to enter was of that picturesque character so often seen in the buildings of the Tudor age. Had all other motives been wanting, the sign of Launceston Castle over the Gothic door, the square-headed and mullioned windows, the ivy-grown walls and chimneys, the rosebush and jasmine creeping and twining around the porch, would at once have attracted my attention, and decided such a child of fancy as myself here to rest after the toils of a long and weary road. The garden that surrounded the house was pleasing and indicative of plenty; the apple and the elder were flourishing, rich with their autumnal fruits. The holyhock and the sunflower, those regal flowers of the *parterre*, so commonly found in the little plot of ground belonging to the humblest cottages of the west, were here seen in their array of full-blown beauty. A stream of the purest water, which rose from some unseen source within the bosom of a neighbouring rock, after passing a small orchard that formed the background of the dwelling, went rambling and talking on to join the Tamar which at no great distance flowed towards Gressonbridge.

Here then I was glad to afford myself, Thomas, and our horses a halt for an hour. As I approached the door, a neat little old woman, with a mob-cap and pinners, came curtsying and welcoming me into the best apartment, to which a large jug of flowers in the window-seat gave a cheerful air. On entering I perceived a traveller seated at a table and partaking of some cold viands. He very civilly accosted me with, "A warm day, sir, for the road," and begged me to come and join him at the same table, if, as he supposed, I was about to rest myself on my way. I thanked him and accepted his civility.

I was in fact particularly pleased with the appearance and manner of the stranger.

He was elderly, plainly dressed, and looked more like a man of substance than one of consequence. He wore no gold lace,

no sword, but a good drab suit, and a hat as plain, with a short tie-wig. His countenance was peculiarly prepossessing ; one of those that invite confidence on the first glance. He was a stout and rather heavy-made man, with a broad chest ; his cheeks were full and ruddy ; not a wrinkle was on his brow, which in its expression was open as the sun at noonday. He smiled often and pleasantly, and the full grey eye beamed with good-humour and benevolence.

Before our meal was over we were friends ; and though my habits were those of great temperance, I could not refuse to sip a glass of punch from the very modest measure concocted in a beautiful china bowl, which my companion ordered, to drink to our better acquaintance.

"Sir," said he, "I am much mistaken if I have not the pleasure of being known to your family, though not to yourself. May I ask if your name is Ardenell ?"

"It is, sir, at your service."

"I thought as much. Young gentleman, you bear a strong resemblance to a very old friend of mine, who was one of the worthiest men I ever knew—your father, I presume, Mr. John Ardenell, of Launceston."

"I have indeed, sir," I replied, "the happiness to be his son. I can never cease to lament that he should have been taken from us whilst he was yet but in the prime of life. Great is my loss and that of my poor mother and sister."

"Ay, sir, in respect to him," said my companion, "we may quote the words of the prophet and say, 'His sun is gone down while it is yet day.' But God knows what is best both for the living and the dead. Many years have elapsed since I was in the habit of meeting your father, in his legal capacity ; and having since changed my master,—sir, I have a master, for I am land-steward to the great and wealthy Sir Thomas Joinacre, of Roseteague, Cornwall,—the affairs of my employer seldom bring me to Launceston ; but I neither forget my old friends nor the old town. May I ask how is the good lady your mother ?"

"Well, sir, I thank you. I left her but this morning, and in some anxiety on my account, for I am about to proceed to Exeter, to be ordained on a title for holy orders."

"A matter of great moment both for yourself and for the heart of a mother," he replied. "May I ask who gives you the title ?"

"The Reverend Mr. Ambrose Manaton, of the Parish of —, near Launceston."

"I know him well, sir; there cannot be a better man. But the living is small. Mr. Manaton is old, and has been too charitable to grow rich on his little means. His age, I heard, has obliged him to take a curate. You will have a happy home. But (he added, smiling very goodhumouredly) beware, young gentleman, of one danger. Mr. Manaton has a daughter. Miss Maria is as beautiful and as good as an angel, but she can have no money and the hope of none."

In this manner we chatted on till the time drew near for me to resume my journey. Before parting I asked the name of my new friend. He told me it was Mr. Colin Trewint; and after ordering his saddle-bags to be carefully adjusted on his horse, he took his leave of me in these words,—

"I am glad indeed that you are about to enter on so sacred a profession, under the eye of so good a man as Mr. Manaton; but he is old and infirm. Something may happen; you may want a friend. If so, drop me a line to this address (he gave me a card, on which he wrote it), and not only for your late father's sake, but for your own, I will do all I can to serve you; and though I say it, who ought not to say it, I have some interest with gentlemen of family and fortune in the county; particularly with Sir Thomas Joinacre, whom I hope I have not served unfaithfully, though we do sometimes differ in our views of business. Good-day, young gentleman. Make my compliments to the lady your mother. I wish you good success in the ministry."

So saying, we shook hands and parted. I once more mounted; and he pursued that road over which I had passed in the morning. I met with no further adventure, and reached Exeter in safety.

What a solemn rite is ordination! and how noble was the spectacle it presented in our cathedral! The building, venerable from age, partially lighted by the beams of the sun streaming through windows of richly-stained glass. Its high and vaulted roof its clustered columns and lengthened aisles, somewhat obscured by that partial gloom which always hangs about the recesses and remote portions of a Gothic structure, altogether struck me as most impressive. It seemed, as I looked upon it, to suggest to the imagination a figure of that religion in whose ranks I was about to be enrolled as one among the leaders of

the Church militant here on earth. That which is partially revealed and partially hidden, either in the moral or the physical world, carries with it a sense of awe and mystery.

The bishop, an old man with a meek and venerable countenance, looked on the young men who knelt around the altar with a benignant and affectionate air. And as he laid his aged hands on the heads of those he ordained, whilst he raised his eyes to heaven, his whole soul seemed rapt with the devotional feeling of the office in which he was engaged. As I listened to the solemn words he pronounced, I felt them in the depth of my heart; and the awe-inspiring privilege of becoming a chosen servant of God, for so great a work, seemed to raise me beyond the things of earth. From that hour I determined, however lowly my lot in life might be, that I would never forget the authority with which, as a minister of religion, I was invested to speak fearlessly the law, the will of my heavenly Master.

Such were the feelings with which a few days after ordination I took upon me the duties of curate to the Reverend Ambrose Manaton.

CHAPTER II.

“Didst thou but know the inly touch of love,
Thou wouldst as soon go kindle fire with snow
As seek to quench the fire of love with words.”

SHAKESPEARE.

It was not altogether without sufficient cause that my new friend, Mr. Colin Trewint, had warned me to be on my guard against

“The golden shaft of Cupid’s bow”

in relation to Miss Maria Manaton. She was indeed good and beautiful enough to have inspired a passion in any but the coldest breast. I could have loved her, heart and soul, had I dared give the rein to feeling and imagination. But two very chilling companions for the season of youth were continually checking me—poverty and prudence.

I knew that it was only by the practice of the greatest frugality that my poor mother contrived to support herself and my sister, and that I possessed little more than the thirty pounds a year resulting from my curacy. I knew that Mr. Manaton, obliged by the infirmity of his age to engage me to do his duty for him, could ill afford to pay me ; whilst every shilling I received was taking so much from the little store he hoped to save and leave his only child at his death.

Under these circumstances, it seemed to me that to lead an innocent being, who, I fancied, was not unwilling to confide in me, into an engagement I might never have it in my power to ratify, would be a cruel return on my part for the unrestrained confidence with which the good old gentleman treated me, not only in relation to his daughter, but in everything else ; for he seemed to lean on me as on the staff of his age. But though I saw the imprudence that attended the indulgence of my feelings towards Maria, I could not altogether repress them ; there was a struggle to do what was right, and a struggle which caused me much pain.

I know not whether it were from anxiety of mind, or that my constitution, never strong, disposed me the more readily to receive infection ; but on a fever of a malignant nature breaking out in our neighbourhood, in the summer next to that on which I became curate, I caught the disorder whilst attending in my ministry a woman who died of it. By God's blessing, though with difficulty, my life was saved ; but the fever left me in such a state of debility that my doctor declared, that unless I made complete holiday and changed the air, he feared a rapid decline would be the consequence. Great was my distress, for I could not afford to travel ; and now did I experience the goodness of Mr. Manaton. He protested that I should neither lose my curacy nor my health ; that old though he was, he would nevertheless try to do the duty whilst I was absent, and there was a young clergyman in the next parish who, he knew, would give him all the assistance he could require. That he would pay me the next quarter of my stipend in advance, and to this my mother proposed to add a few pounds from her savings, so that altogether I should be well furnished to make a little journey for the restoration of my health. All this was kind, but I still felt doubtful.

Maria joined in these persuasions. She changed colour, and her voice faltered as she said, " Indeed, Mr. Ardenell, I do hope you will be prevailed on by your friends, to whom your welfare is dear, to do all you can for the recovery of your health. I will assist my father in the care of his parish whilst you are away. Let me entreat you to leave us for a time—better to part for a season than for ever."

Tears rose in her eyes as she spoke the last words. I could no longer resist ; I took her hand in mine, and without giving a second thought to what I did, prompted alone by the feelings of the moment, that were too strong to be repressed, I said, " Oh ! Miss Manaton, how is it possible I can feel indifferent to a life which you have rendered so happy by showing that you take an interest in its preservation ? I dare only say that my heart can never cease to acknowledge the debt of gratitude by which it is for ever bound to you."

Maria turned aside her head in evident emotion, distressed but not displeased ; she gently withdrew her hand, but spoke not a word in reply. I dared not continue, for what had I to offer that I should seek to make her mine ? Checked by the fear I had gone too far, and had said what might offend

her father, I stood trembling and confused, not daring to look him in the face. But the good old man, who, no doubt, saw my distress, came to my relief, and saying that he feared my spirits were too much broken by my bodily weakness to allow me to part with firmness from my friends, advised me to recruit them as soon as I could, and set out without delay on my journey. I did so on the next morning.

After having visited various points of interest on the coast of Cornwall, I made my way to that of North Devon. There I met with a remarkably intelligent man, the master of a small farm, whose name was Gwendra. I agreed to lodge and board with him for a few weeks. I found him to be singularly shrewd and observing, and he gave me much information about everything worth seeing in the neighbourhood. One day he offered to take me across the Channel in his own vessel to Wales. I was surprised indeed to find that he should be in the possession of a vessel, but suspected nothing.

Accordingly I went on board, and exceedingly enjoyed the novelty of my situation and the beauty of the ocean. But what was my surprise, when we were thus happily sailing before the breeze in the British Channel, to find a vessel that came in sight commence chasing and firing her guns upon us in a very determined manner. The truth now became apparent, we were chased by a revenue cutter; nor had I till that moment the most distant suspicion that I was on board a notorious smuggler. She was, however, a fast sailer, and so contrived to escape and get safe off. My situation had been most perilous; for, as at that time many smugglers were known to be employed to carry emiesaries, money, and despatches between England and France for the service of the Pretender, had we been taken no excuse of mine could have availed; and, in all probability, I should have been imprisoned, perhaps ruined, from the strong suspicions that would have attached themselves to my character for ever after as an agent of the house of Stuart. At a future period of my narrative the reader will see wherefore it is I am thus particular in my notice of this sea-trip with my landlord Gwendra. As soon as we landed I took leave of my smuggling friend—who, to speak truth, had treated me with much kindly attention—and hastened back to Launceston.

At no former period had I come in sight of the lofty keep of the old castle, but I felt that cheerful emotion warm my bosom which always connects itself with our thoughts of home. The

antiquated houses, the steep surrounding hills, were all so many objects of endearment; and no other spot in the wide world ever appeared to me to possess the charm which hung around the ancient and picturesque walls of Dunheved, for by that name did the Britons and the Romans call the town of Launceston.

On my present return to it, I cannot tell how it was, but a weight hung on my spirits that I could not shake off. I approached my mother's door with something of that sense of fear which, young as I was, I could remember to have experienced on my first return home when a child after the death of my father.

No sooner did I enter the house than the sight of the black ribbons in the caps of my mother and sister, and above all their grave looks (mingling the grief of bad news to be told with the joy of my welcome) struck on my heart with an indescribable sense of fear. I could not ask what had chanced, all I could utter was the name of Maria.

"She is well," said my mother, "but the poor old gentleman, full of goodness and of years, he, my dear son, is no more. He is now with the spirits of the just, rejoicing in the bosom of his Creator."

"This is a severe stroke for me," I said; "but where is his daughter?"

"At present with an aunt at Exeter. Miss Maria is to stay with her till some suitable situation is procured for her. She is, I believe, to go up to London to assist in a ladies' school."

It would be impossible for me to describe what were my feelings on hearing all this. Had I been possessed of a living, or of any independence whatever, my heart and hand should instantly have been offered to Maria, and so I told my mother. She advised me to act with prudence; represented to me how young we both were, how uncertain our prospects; that I might never have it in my power to marry; that Miss Manaton might be sent to London or elsewhere, and years might pass away before we could meet, even as friends; and that if I tied her down to myself by any engagement, I might be the means of preventing some happy settlement for her in life, which, considering her beauty and worth, she was very likely to obtain. No doubt many offers would be made to her, for all men were not mercenary, and some preferred beauty and love to money.

My reason assented to all this, but never could my mother

have struck on a worse argument for consolation. For the first time in my life I felt the pangs of doubt and jealousy ; and even the beggary of Maria, the ruin of us both, did we unite our destinies of poverty together, seemed to me happier than the thoughts of life without her. I did not conceal my feelings from my mother, but determined, let me endure what I would, that her prudence, her counsels, should be my guides, and not those of my own suffering and impetuous heart. By my mother's persuasion, therefore, I gave over all present thoughts of Maria ; and, though with many a bitter pang, by her advice I wrote that unhappy girl a letter expressive merely of sympathy with her loss, and general good-will towards herself, but without one syllable of the love which filled my whole soul for her.

After having performed this duty in a manner so unsatisfactory to myself, I could find no comfort in my own reflections ; I needed the company of my mother ; I required the support of her good sense in an affair where her rectitude of mind had so completely triumphed over my more natural and less heroic feelings. I was dreadfully depressed, and did not stir out that evening ; and, my sister having an engagement to visit a young friend, my mother and I were left to keep house together. I could scarcely forbear a smile in the midst of my distress to see the attention she bestowed on me in a thousand little personal comforts, to show how rejoiced she was for my safe return, as if they could afford me relief at such a moment. The old rambling house in which she had lived so long had been left to her by my father. The wainscoted walls were dark from age, and the ceiling with the smoke of many generations. The furniture was old-fashioned, principally of carved oak. Though a good fire blazed on the hearth—for it was towards the middle of autumn, and the evenings were cold—yet was there an air of more than usual gloom that hung about the apartment.

The weather too was stormy. The rain beat against the windows, the wind blew hard and howled in loud gusts without, and within whistled through the crevices of the ill-shutting doors of our old house, which every now and then blew open from its violence. This singing and whistling in the most melancholy cadence was more especially audible along a spacious oak gallery that led from the head of the hall stairs, and gave access by side doors to all the chambers on the second floor ; for, though much fallen into decay, in former days the mansion was one of some pretensions.

On the walls of the oak gallery hung the pride of my mother—the series of family portraits in antiquated frames. Like the originals, many of them were worm-eaten; and all, except those of my father and mother, old. None were by first-rate artists, and a more chalky or dingy set of grandfathers and grandmothers no family could boast. I do not think there was one pretty girl among the females; and for the males, in all save one, the wig was their most imposing feature. Yet, such as they were, my poor mother took pride in them; and not one would she have exchanged for the finest Rembrandt or Vandyke that had no claim on her feelings.

As I before said, the evening was dreariness itself without, and we were in no mood to find it cheerful within. At length all was silent and still; there was a dead calm, which was rendered the more striking from the previous disturbance of the elements. Although the fire was doing well enough, I gave it a rousing stir to burn brighter, as if to enliven myself with its flame. I was sick at heart, scarcely a ray of hope seemed before me to guide me on my way. My late rector's death made it imperative upon me soon to seek employment, and my mother's conversation very naturally turned upon this head; she spoke with some anxiety on the subject.

I then reminded her of the interview I had with Mr. Colin Trewint, who, on my going into orders, had offered to interest himself in my behalf; how he said that he had much influence, particularly with Sir Thomas Joinacre, and I might rely on his good-will.

"Not with Sir Thomas Joinacre!" said my mother, in a tone of surprise. "I hope not with him."

I was astonished at hearing this, and the more so as it was spoken with an energy very unusual with my mother, who in general was placidity itself in her discourse. Her countenance also changed, and her manner became disturbed. I could not refrain from expressing my surprise, and begged her to tell me why the mention of Sir Thomas Joinacre should have so alarmed her. But she sighed, shook her head, and, as she was above all shift or excuse, told me very plainly that she had her own reasons for not wishing to talk about him.

"But, my dear mother," I said, "as I shall certainly apply to Mr. Colin Trewint for assistance in my present strait, we must speak of him. Suppose, for instance, that Mr. Trewint were to recommend me in some way to the service of Sir Thomas Joinacre at Roseteague?"

As I spoke these words a tremendous noise, as of something of weight suddenly falling to the ground, was heard in the adjoining gallery. I started up, saying, "What is that?"

How shall I speak my amazement when my mother with a countenance pale as death, whose expression denoted terror, as she clasped her hands together, whilst trembling in every limb, exclaimed, "Treville Crewse has fallen! Oh! my son, what does that forebode?"

"What does the tumbling down of an old portrait in your gallery forbode, my dear mother?" I said, surprised at her fears, and endeavouring to smile her out of them. "What but that the frame is rotten, or the iron cramp that held it has given way,—that's all."

"No, no," she replied in a more agitated manner, "that is not all. Oh! Frank, you do not know it, I did not wish you to know it, for I knew you would treat the matter lightly; yet it is a solemn truth that for many years past, before any serious disaster in our family, the portrait of your grandfather, Treville Crewse, has always fallen. The last time it did so, was the night before your poor father died."

I could not smile at this allusion; but I bade my mother endeavour to be calm, and, taking up one of the candles, opened the door, and went into the gallery to see what was the matter with my grandfather. I found the old picture on the floor certainly, but in what way it had managed to tumble down seemed to me quite as inexplicable and mysterious as my mother's account of the traditionary terrors annexed to its fall, for the staple which had fastened it was still in the wall.

If it were that I was infected by the sight of her fears, or if I had never before so attentively considered the old picture, I cannot tell; but it now struck me that the distressed expression which always characterized it looked more than usually dismal.

The portrait of Treville Crewse represented a young man who could not have been more than two or three and twenty years old when it was painted. A rock was seen at his back, overhung with trees. He wore a full-bottom, flowing periwig, no hat. A long Flanders laced cravat was about his throat, and for the rest he was attired in a sort of fancy costume, in which there was a good deal of scarlet and blue. He held a fowling-piece in his hand, which seemed secured by a chain round his shoulders. A beautiful spaniel dog was depicted leaping up against his master with much animation.

As I now looked upon it, I fancied there was something of a wild as well as of a distressed expression about his countenance ; and whether from the effects of time or the colours having partially flown, or that it might be a faithful transcript of the original, the face was of so pallid a hue that in our house the picture was more generally known by the title of "the pale-faced gentleman" than by its own proper name of Treville Crewse.

I held the candle so that the light struck full upon the face ; and most attentively did I survey the features, as if I sought to read in them some explanation of that mysterious power of motion which the picture seemed to possess. I looked till I almost fancied that the eyes moved. I heard a deep sigh near me, and turned to see whence it came. Not till that moment did I perceive that my mother had stolen softly behind me, and, like myself, was gazing fixedly upon the portrait before me.

"Do not look at it any longer, Frank," she said, shuddering. "Put it up carefully against the wall. To-morrow you shall hang it up again ; Tom shall help you then, but do not call him now ; I will assist you."

She did so ; and after placing Treville Crewse, with his pale face and strangely-searching eyes, safe against the wall, we left the gallery, and once more returned to the oak parlour to talk about him.

CHAPTER III.

"The laws have cast me off from every claim
Of house and kindred, and within my veins
Turn'd noble blood to baseness and reproach.
I'll cast them off; why should they be to me
A bar, and no protector?"

JOANNA BAILLIE.

"My son," said my mother, as she resumed her seat with a grave air, "I have never told you much about my unfortunate father; the subject is a painful one to me, full of bitter disappointment; and will be so to you, when I tell you that, had right been done to that unhappy man we have just been looking upon, our situation in life would have been different to what it is. You need not have given up Maria because poverty stood between her and your affections."

"I am surprised, indeed. My dear mother, what do you mean? This is all as new and as mysterious to me as the fall of the old picture."

"That truly is a mystery which bodes no good," she replied. "In my time I have known it fall thrice, and—"

"But Treville Crewse," I said; "do tell me more of him. All that I know of him is what you have told me: that he married very young, was the father of two daughters, of which you are the surviving one; and that, had he lived till the present time, he would not have been a very old man."

"Not more than sixty-five years old; but, alas! he has long been dead. Imprudence, folly, misfortune, early marked him as their prey; and he fell a broken-hearted victim to their snares. Ay, my son, well may Solomon say, 'So shall poverty come and want as an armed man.' His history, though one of great suffering, may soon be told, and yet I can only give it to you in its leading features; for as to the manner in which he was deceived and kept out of his property, I cannot explain it. It was mixed up with law, lawyers, and false friends; all went to ruin. But so it is, if a man by his imprudence once gets into

difficulty, he lays himself open to become a prey to the sordid and the cunning, who, too often, under the pretext of helping him to settle his affairs, pluck from him what little remains, and turn him adrift on the wide world in more distress than he was in before he sought their help."

My mother was strongly excited; she paused a few minutes to collect her thoughts, and thus commenced her narrative:—

"By the sudden death of his father, Treville Crewse came into the possession of a large estate at the dangerous age of nineteen. The result was that, being surrounded by many wild companions and designing men, who pretended a friendship for him, and indulging in every kind of extravagance, he became so deeply involved in debt that he was committed to prison in Rougemont Castle, Exeter. Not long before this he ran away with and married a lovely young woman, who had no fortune. She brought him one child—my sister, long since dead—and was on the eve of being a second time a mother, when the news of her husband's arrest gave her so great a shock that it brought on a premature confinement, and after giving birth to a female infant—myself—she died. This affliction had a terrible effect on my poor father's mind."

"No wonder," I said; "to lose a beloved wife from such a cause was a cruel aggravation of his sufferings."

"It was so, indeed. Treville Crewse was in gaol principally at the suit of the very Sir Thomas Joinacre we have this day named. Sir Thomas was young then, but known for a strict creditor, who seldom spared. The effect of these circumstances was overwhelming. The mind of the unhappy man, already fevered and excited by his arrest, after his wife's death, became for a time absolutely insane. I have been told that he never perfectly recovered his reason. He was ever after wild, eccentric, subject to those moods of high excitement and caprice so frequently the result of aberration of mind."

"And what became of you, my dear mother—you, who were born under circumstances of such heart-rending distress? What became also of the eldest girl, your sister?"

"My sister was taken under the charge of a distant relative—a foreign lady, who happened to be in England at the time of my poor mother's sufferings. This lady adopted her as her own; but I have been assured that she died in childhood abroad. For myself, I was not a week old when, on the death of my mother, I was placed under the care of her only sister, and with

her I lived till I married your father, before I had completed my seventeenth year."

"And where did Treville Crewse die?" I inquired,—"in Rougemont Castle?"

"No," replied my mother; "he remained in prison, neglected and unpitied for many a long year, till at length in an early part of the reign of his present Majesty, King George the Second, on the Act of Insolvency being passed, he was released from prison, upon his making over all his estates and effects to certain assignees, whose dealings with my unhappy father, I have been told, were unrelenting and cruel; they finally turned his brain and broke his heart. He died, in the fortieth year of his age, in a house in St. David's, Exeter. For some years before his death he was accustomed to carry about with him, under his arm, a small leather trunk, and say that it contained his law deeds and papers, and was very precious to him. Latterly he was commonly known in Exeter as 'the mazed Treville Crewse.' My poor father, though his intellects were latterly clouded, was naturally a man of ability and fine understanding."

"And did you never recover any portion of his property? Never, after his death?"

"Not a penny," she replied. "Who were finally the assignees of his estate, I do not know. They were more than once changed by one party or the other seceding from the trust. When my poor father died I was little more than a child, and the aunt with whom I lived knew nothing of the law, and had no money to spend upon it. All that came into my possession, for which I felt any interest, was the small leather trunk which day by day my father carried under his arm. No documents of any value respecting his claims were found in it, but mostly a collection of old papers written by snatches by Treville Crewse himself in the hours of his deep distress. Should you like to see them, I can show them to you."

My curiosity, as well as my compassion, was greatly raised; I implored my mother to let me see them, and she immediately left the room in order to gratify my request.

It would be impossible for me to describe the feelings with which I received from her hands a little old-fashioned, faded red leather trunk, studded with brass-headed nails. She gave it to me with such an air of melancholy veneration, as a good Catholic would bestow on the relics of a favourite saint, charging me not to lose the smallest fragment of its contents, and to restore all to her as soon as my curiosity might be satisfied.

Of law papers and parchments I found only a few ; and as these were not of a nature to interest the imagination, or to touch the heart, I did not read them. Nor did I examine a multitude of bills, some of large amount, that were docketed *unpaid*. Various letters from lawyers I did not open. It was the miscellaneous contents that interested me ; and to these I directed my attention.

Many and strange were the things that I found huddled together. One was of great attraction. A well-painted miniature of a most lovely woman in the bloom of youth : this I knew at once was the unhappy man's wife. Under this, wrapped in a piece of silver paper with much care, strange to say, I found an old playing-card, *the ace of spades*. With it a richly-worked purse—empty, except that a gold seal thumb-ring, bearing the arms of Treville Crewse engraved upon it, was stored in one corner. Love sonnets next appeared ; and a packet of his wife's letters, docketed as written before marriage. A silver tobacco-box and a stopper for his pipe, a betting-book, and another small book on the games of whist, basset, and ombre, and many other things did I find as heterogeneous as these.

But the most interesting of all were the unfortunate man's papers, or rather journals concerning himself, written at various periods of his imprisonment ; and though wild and irregular they afforded marks of an understanding originally good, a tender and susceptible heart, and a mind capable of noble things, had it been better trained or under stricter discipline. I was so deeply interested that I did not give over the search till long after midnight ; the papers are still in my possession. From a few of the most remarkable—principally about his wife—I select the following, feeling assured they will afford a better illustration of the character of Treville Crewse than anything I can possibly say about him.

FRAGMENT THE FIRST.

“ Good God ! Where am I now ? In a prison ! And is this the end of all my hopes ? My hopes of all coming round, if I could but get another loan to satisfy that rapacious creditor to whom I owe my ruin ! Yes, my ruin ; for who first led me to the gaming-table but that villain ! That cruel, false, seeming friend, Villars. I was bad enough before, but this completed it. And my wife ; my poor innocent wife ! How will she bear it ;

How when it shall be told to her that I am ruined ; that a prison is the home which awaits her ; that her infant may draw its first breath amid vice and degradation ! No, no ; she shall not come here. I will not see her, and yet my heart yearns, and my eyes ache after her. Could I but look on her sweet mild face, it would calm my distraction."

FRAGMENT THE SECOND.

"What a dreadful place this is ! to see the wretches that come into it—at first so shocked, so overwhelmed ! and then by the very infection of vice which, like the plague, casts the spot on all who come near it,—to see how soon they become hardened like the nether mill-stone, past feeling, past shame, glorying in a degradation that sinks a human soul lower than the brutes that perish !

"And am I an inmate of this castle of horror and despair ! It was that ace of spades that did it. Oh ! that night, that night of desperation ! haunted by creditors, like hounds, ready to fly at my throat, I thought to win all back again, and tried for it, prompted by the devil in the form of that false Villars—for he did prompt me to his own wily purpose, and I am sure he knew that ace of spades was a marked card—I would stake my life that he was in league with the villains at the table, and that card—ay, marked as fiends mark their victims for the ruin of their souls—marked for my ruin ; yes, I am *ruined*. But I will have my revenge on that accursed card, though the fiend himself held it as his last stake."

FRAGMENT THE THIRD.

"June 25 ! This day have I received the letter from her sister to tell me that my wife is dying ! O God ! have mercy ! she is dying—but I will see her—the governor, even of a prison, cannot deny a miserable man the privilege of seeing for the last time the wife of his bosom. But he has denied me—how shall I support it ? She is gone, and I have not seen her—do I live to tell it ? she is dead—dead. And I, who by my follies have destroyed her, have not had the consolation of hearing her say—and she would have said it, for she was an angel of love and pity,—‘Treville, I forgive you all.’ Oh ! how cruel—how stern a denial was this ! I did not think it had been in the heart. of

man to deny me. But he has no wife ; he does not know the feelings of a husband, whose heart is torn with grief and unavailing remorse. And then the cause assigned for the denial, that he was answerable for the security of my body to my creditors, and above all the rest to Sir Thomas Joinacre—answerable to him for my security ; but I will be patient. My wife ! I shall behold her no more—and the poor infant is in the hands of her sister ; it is well. The babe shall not come here, for what should a cherub have to do with the reprobate, and here Beelzebub reigns in chief. I must then never hope to see her ! and yet it would have been a blessing to view the mother's beauty revived in the innocent looks of the dear child,—to fancy that the lip had her smile—the eye her love and pity, to take so sweet a creature to my bosom and call it my own. To have her love me, pray for me even in death—to lay my head in the grave, and then to have her say, 'There rests my poor broken-hearted father !' But I can never know these blessings—debt and a prison have blasted my good name, shame and neglect must be my portion.

"I think I could have borne all better, had I but seen her before she died—to have heard her speak one word of forgiveness. But now, remorse towards the dead ! Oh ! it is terrible ; there we can make no atonement. Oh ! that God might pardon me—yet will He pardon me ? No, I can never pardon myself, nor that false friend who led me to ruin—no, never. If I am doomed to linger out my days here in the hopeless sufferings of a debtor's prison, or if driven till my brain is on fire and I become lost to all but a fantastic sense of my own misery in the asylum of a lunatic, I will never pardon that man, if I die with a curse upon my lips—I will not."

This was too horrible. It spoke the state of the wretched writer's mind, and showed that the aberration, of whose approach he seemed himself to be aware, had already made fearful work in his brain. I closed the journal, nor did I speedily resume it. There were many other papers that possibly might have thrown some light on the complicated law transactions in which the unhappy man had been engaged ; but after having read those that showed in so strong and terrible a manner the state of his thoughts and feelings on the subjects nearest to his heart, I could not descend to matters of a more common kind. I restored the documents to the trunk with all due care, and locked it. I then retired to bed, musing deeply on the

sad disclosures of that evening, and felt as sincerely grieved for the misfortunes of my grandfather, "the mazed Treville Crewse," as he was called, as if he were still living, instead of all his sorrows and troubles having been laid to rest more than twenty years before, and himself long since mingled with his kindred dust.

CHAPTER IV.

"What Fates impose, that men must need abide;
It boots not to resist both wind and tide.
Farewell—all comfort go with thee!
For none abides with me: my joy is—death."

SHAKESPEARE.

I AROSE the next morning certainly in a more calm, but still in a very anxious frame of mind. I was without a curacy; almost without a friend; and I knew not where to look for employment. And this, too, at an age when not only my determination never to become a burden to my poor mother, but my desire for action, rendered idleness irksome to me, and imperatively called on me to make some exertion for myself.

At breakfast my future prospects became the theme of our discourse. My mother wept when I talked of leaving the west, and going up to London, the general mart where my inexperience taught me to fancy that a clergyman out of employment would as easily obtain it as our Cornish lasses do, when, tempted by a spirit of wandering, they venture upon so long a journey in the waggon for the advancement of their fortunes in the great metropolis.

My mother, who had never seen London, and had formed her ideas of its dangers and temptations for a young man from a set of prints of Mr. Hogarth's "Rake's Progress," trembled and turned pale at the very thoughts of such an exposure of my youth and inexperience to all the devices and deep-laid snares of so wicked a town. She was in the very height of her exhortations to prevail with me to accept rather the poorest means of subsistence that could be offered me in the country, when the parlour-door opened, and our old Dinah announced, "A gentleman come to speak with young master."

Without waiting for more ceremony the portly person of my roadside acquaintance, Mr. Colin Trewint, presented itself to our wondering eyes. He was kindly welcomed by us both; and it instantly rushed across my mind that he had come at the very moment when, without the slightest impropriety, I might

call on him to render me one of those services he had so freely offered on our first meeting. The preliminaries of welcome over, my mother, having composed her spirits to do the honours of the house, made some fresh tea, and took care of our guest.

Mr. Colin Trewint prepared to open the subject which had occasioned his visit, by saying it was one he had much at heart. "Madam," he continued, addressing my mother with a good deal of the formal courtesy of his day, "I have a particular esteem for your son, and am most desirous to serve him, having your good leave for the same."

"He is the best of sons, sir," said my mother, "and (she affectionately added, not heeding the confusion she called up in me by her eulogium) although I may be suspected of a mother's fondness, yet it is nothing but truth—he is as good a Christian as ever lived, and will do honour to the person whom he serves, were it his Majesty himself."

"I doubt it not, madam," replied Mr. Trewint, smiling with the utmost good-humour at this extravagant sally of maternal love. "And though I come not from the king, yet I am here somewhat in the character of a plenipotentiary. Madam, I am deputed by the master whom I serve to wait on you, and to say that Sir Thomas Joinacre having heard the estimable character of your son—"

"Sir Thomas Joinacre !" exclaimed my mother ; "Sir Thomas Joinacre send you to my son ! What would he have with him ? God keep the boy from the hands and the ways of Sir Thomas Joinacre !"

My mother coloured highly as she spoke these words ; her warmth of temper was roused. No doubt the coming down of the old picture on the previous night, and the conversation that followed, wherein she had so vividly recalled the misfortunes the unhappy Treville Crewse sustained, in which Sir Thomas Joinacre seemed to have been implicated, had altogether called up a very strong feeling and renewed a very painful impression, so that the sudden announcement of his name, like the flint striking upon steel with a sharp blow, had instantly kindled the flame.

I, who had only the night before read the passages I have given from the unfortunate man's journal, certainly felt no prepossession in favour of Sir Thomas Joinacre, but I was more temperate than my mother. It was long since my grandfather Treville Crewse had run his career, and suffered for his folly ;

and it did not follow because Sir Thomas might have been mixed up with his affairs, perhaps reprehensibly, more than twenty years before, that he was still the same man. Many who are wild in youth become steady at a more advanced age. Sir Thomas was now a man of note, and of very great respectability in the county of Cornwall. I was therefore vexed that my mother gave vent to her indignation before she learnt even the purport of his message.

"Madam," said Mr. Colin Trewint, who was good-nature personified, "it is quite true that I have not been many years in the service of Sir Thomas Joinacre, and that my employment is nothing more than land-steward, Mr. Lawyer Trewheedle having the entire management of all his legal and more private affairs, yet I can assure you, on my own knowledge of his character, that in your prejudice against Sir Thomas you do him wrong. He is a gentleman of great estate, a magistrate, and has twice represented the county in Parliament. No man stands better in point of credit. And though a careful man, I will not say he is a penurious man, as he ever encourages a good tenant, though sometimes he may be a thought too hard with one of a less estimable description."

"I know nothing about him of late years," said my mother; "my knowledge of him relates to his early life."

"I will not deny," replied Mr. Trewint, "that I have heard he was somewhat wild in youth. But I would recall to your mind the number of years which have passed since he sowed his wild oats, as the saying is. I have also heard—pardon me, madam, for speaking so freely—that your unfortunate father was not exactly the man from whom one would take the character of any gentleman against whom he had conceived a dislike; and he was not of the soundest judgment at the last. Now when we find a man like Sir Thomas Joinacre, who has lived for thirty years together with credit in his own county, I cannot but think he is entitled to a more charitable construction of his motives, in respect to former transactions, than you seem disposed to give him. And I would remind you, madam, that your father unhappily gave himself up to the intimacy of a certain Mr. Villars, who was known for a gambler and a villain. I have been assured that he it was who completed the ruin of Mr. Treville Crewse."

My poor mother suffered Mr. Colin Trewint to make this very long speech in favour of Sir Thomas without interrupting him. But she looked by no means pleased with the eulogium,

nor was she convinced that he deserved it, and in a few words begged Mr. Trewint to say what might be the purport of Sir Thomas's business with her son.

"A very honourable one, madam, I can assure you. And one that I think cannot fail to be of the utmost service to young Mr. Ardenell. Sir Thomas Joinacre is growing old, and, not being able to attend so much as he used to do his parish-church, he has determined on adopting a custom formerly common with the opulent families in the county—that of taking a domestic chaplain ; and, having heard that by the death of Mr. Manaton your son was in want of a curacy, he has deputed me to offer him the chaplaincy of Roseteague, with the very considerable stipend of fifty pounds a year."

My mother, heedless of so great an offer as this really was for such a duty, unmindful of all the advantages annexed to it, and thinking only of the past, with all the terrors which a superstitious dread had awakened in her bosom, clasped her hands together, looked upwards, and exclaimed in the most agitated manner, "Then that dreadful omen of evil has not been permitted in vain ; the picture of Treville Crewse has again fallen, and the last descendant of his ancient line will become the victim of his greatest enemy—of the enemy who helped, to say the least, to bring on him ruin, misery, and death."

Mr. Colin Trewint looked amazed, as well he might, at hearing expressions such as these. For myself, what between my anxiety to calm the agitation—and, were it possible, to overcome the visionary terrors—that possessed my mother's mind, and to excuse so ungracious a reception of the very liberal offer of Sir Thomas, it may well be supposed I had enough to do. My mother wept bitterly ; and though she would not, and did not, interfere to prevent my accepting the proposal, she gave her consent to it at last as mothers do when a pressgang or a recruiting sergeant takes from them their sons, who have heedlessly enlisted, or have been ensnared into a dangerous service from which there is no retreat.

Mr. Colin Trewint bore all this strange scene with the most perfect patience. He made every allowance for my poor mother's prejudices and fears ; and in order to reconcile her as much as possible to my entering on the chaplaincy, he told her that the living of —— was in the gift of Sir Thomas, the present incumbent was aged, and he had no doubt, on anything happening to him, I should be nominated as his successor.

On hearing this my poor mother in a sad tone and resigned manner expressed her thanks ; and before Mr. Colin Trewint took his leave it was agreed that in a few days I should take up my residence at Roseteague as the domestic chaplain of Sir Thomas Joinacre.

CHAPTER V.

"Age sits with decent grace upon her visage,
And worthily becomes her silver locks ;
She wears the marks of many well-spent years,
Of virtue, truth, well-tried and wise experience."

Rowe.

I DID not travel alone towards Roseteague. An old friend of my father, Captain Lower, of the Royal Navy, intending to visit an aged kinswoman at St. Maws before joining his ship at Falmouth, offered to bear me company, his road and mine lying in the same direction. He insisted on my going with him to St. Maws, which was not more than two miles distant from Roseteague, and urged me to rest a day with him at the house of his aunt, to recover from my fatigue before I presented myself to Sir Thomas Joinacre. I was the more pleased with the proposal as I found that Mrs. Lower was well known to the family of my patron. I pass in silence the details of a journey which proved highly agreeable, and will only say that I was very kindly welcomed by Mrs. Lower, and remained two days instead of one to partake of her hospitality. So many events of importance, hereafter to be narrated, were connected with her, that I must pause to say something about her to the reader.

She was a maiden lady, not very far from seventy years old, of a tall person and majestic deportment, with a most marked countenance, expressive of strong sense, spirit, and benevolence. I was much pleased with her. She was so entirely of the old school that she seemed as if she more properly belonged to the past than to the present century. Her dress was of the same date. She wore the long stiff waist, the black silk hood, and pinners under the chin, such as I had seen in the portrait of my great-grandmother of the time of Charles the Second. Mrs. Lower's manners, however, were not at all akin to the levity of that period. They more resembled the gravity, with the solemnity of deportment, which characterized the manners of the ladies of birth in the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

Mrs. Lower was a woman of high and ancient blood ; a circumstance that she never forgot herself, and took care that it should not slip from the memory of her friends, by her frequent allusions to one or other of her really worthy and eminent progenitors, male and female. I had received a hint from the captain respecting her character, and her very harmless prejudices in favour of birth and ancestry. I was therefore prepared to pay all respectful attention to the recital with which she favoured me of the names, deeds, and virtues of the Lowers, from the first to the last generation, as, with much condescension, she conducted me through a long gallery of dingy, old-fashioned portraits, not very much better than my poor mother's collection.

I was far more interested by her details than by the pictures themselves, as some anecdote of courage or loyalty, or some shrewd observations illustrative of the men and manners of past times, accompanied her history of each individual in her gallery. Her accounts were not as a mere catalogue of names, nor a mere display of empty pomp and family pride, divested of what makes family pride excusable, if not praiseworthy—a reverence for ancient blood where it flowed to good purpose, to animate the hearts of the great in wisdom and in virtue.

Mrs. Lower's talent for instructive discourse did not, however, rest alone in her ability as a family historian. She was intimately versed in the history of Cornwall—a county which, for its interest, she considered surpassed every other corner on the face of the globe. She was, in fact, a woman of strong local attachment, warm in her ancient faith, whatever might be its object, not given to change, and with an utter dislike to all that was strange and new.

Her loyalty was with her a passion, most ardently cherished for the house of Stuart, in whose cause her own father had lost his life in the year of the Rebellion, 1715. For the memory of King Charles the First she entertained so deep a veneration that, she told me herself, she always put on mourning for him on the fatal 30th of January. One trait in the old lady's character was not a little amusing. I observed, when I once came unexpectedly into the room, that she was engaged in contemplating with much earnestness the miniature of a very young man, who, by the glance I had of it, I saw was depicted in much too modern a dress for the original to have been in existence in Mrs. Lower's youthful days. As I came rather suddenly upon

her, she restored the miniature with some confusion to her bosom. Captain Lower, to whom I mentioned the circumstance, let me into the secret : the treasure was a forbidden thing, being nothing less than the portrait of the young Pretender, Prince Charles Edward Stuart.

Finding I was desirous to learn all I could of the neighbourhood in which I was come to take up my abode, she gave me much curious and agreeable information respecting the places and families around her, now and then seasoning her communications with a little touch of satire, the result of her shrewdness of observation, though she often checked it by a sense of what was due to charity in opinion. Thus, on my saying that I thought the salary I was to receive from Sir Thomas Joinacre, as his domestic chaplain, very handsome, she replied,—

“ Oh ! sir, depend upon it, Sir Thomas will find something for you to do in requital for it. Sir Thomas thinks that nothing is so beneficial as industry, and, therefore, makes all who are in his employ fully earn the wages he awards them. Trust me, young gentleman, Sir Thomas is one who gives nothing where nothing can return to him by way of interest. Heaven forgive me that I should say so, it is not right. Sir Thomas is my cousin-german, only once removed on my mother's side, and to lack charity is to lack that which is of most worth, as St. Paul saith. Pray, sir, think nothing of the prattle of an old woman.”

I assured Mrs. Lower that I had no wish to entertain any prejudices against Sir Thomas Joinacre, or any one belonging to him.

“ Madam,” said the captain, addressing his kinswoman with much eagerness, “ you do not say one word about the rarest thing to be found at Roseteague ; in fact the only thing that makes old Joinacre tolerable in my mind—his daughter. She is the prettiest girl that ever came in my way, and yet I have seen many a buxom lass in many a port.”

“ Nowhere, I should think, nephew,” replied Mrs. Lower, “ nowhere can you have looked on beauty such as the county of Cornwall can boast. Certainly our Cornish ladies are of very great fairness, though they were more so, I grant, in my young days ; nor are the women so tall either as they used to be then,” continued the old lady, drawing herself up with a look of conscious superiority. “ But touching Sir Thomas Joinacre's daughter, she is certainly a pretty young creature, well disposed,

but lacks education, though I have heard her express a wish for the improvement of her mind."

"Lacks education, aunt!" exclaimed Captain Lower. "Why, she can sing like an angel."

"Mere adornment, nephew; singing is mere adornment," replied Mrs. Lower. "No; what I esteem to be education lies not in such frivolities as the young ladies of this age pursue with their guitars and their spinets and their airs from the 'Beggars' Opera.' The education of this age will never produce such a woman as was one of the eminent ladies of my own family, Dame Elizabeth Lower, the wife of Sir Nicholas Lower, Knight, of Clifton, near Landulph, Cornwall; the mother of that brave royalist, Major Lower, who gallantly fell in battle in the cause of that blessed martyr, King Charles the First."

"A cannon-ball whizzed right through him; aunt, I know all about that," said the captain, making an effort to turn aside the often-told tale of Dame Lower and her gallant son.

"But Mr. Ardenell does not know it, though you may," said the old lady with much pertinacity, and she continued, addressing herself to me, "You remember, sir, that majestic-looking lady in the black satin suit, with the small curls and the pearl-drop earrings, among my collection of family portraits; you remember the noble expression of countenance which, in your politeness, you did me the honour to say bore some resemblance, in respect to family likeness, to so humble a descendant of the Lowers as myself. Well, sir, that portrait represents Dame Elizabeth Lower, the wife of Sir Nicholas Lower, Knight. He was her third and last husband. She was the daughter of Sir Henry Killegrew, of London, Knight, anciently descended from the house of Arwenick, in Cornwall, and from the youngest of the learned daughters of Sir Anthony Cooke, Knight, a maid of honour to Queen Elizabeth; and as it says upon her tomb, for true virtue, piety, and learning—pray observe that, Mr. Ardenell, for learning—she came nothing short, that I may modestly speak, of any of her ancestors; and for her singular courtesy and amiable subjection to all her three husbands, a virtue rare and high, could hardly be matched, and deserves a far ampler and higher character than I, or any tombstone, can give her. This lady, sir, was a Lower; and her brilliant example made many females, descendants of her illustrious blood, strive to emulate her virtues and her fame."

I fully acknowledged my sense of the praise due to such merits;

and said as much gravely, notwithstanding the roguish smile I saw on the cheek of my friend the captain, who, to beguile his impatience, whistled the air from the "Beggar's Opera"—

"How happy could I be with either,
Were t' other dear charmer away!"

which somewhat displeased his aunt; so that she asked him if he meant by whistling that foolish air, at such a moment, any reflection on her noble ancestress, Dame Elizabeth Lower, and her three husbands.

"By no means," said Captain Lower, "though three to one is not fair play at any venture, be it matrimonial or otherwise. Pray, aunt, was all the learning of the Lowers confined to the females of the house?"

"No, sir," said Mrs. Lower, "my grandfather, the very celebrated physician to King Charles the Second, who, from the *post-mortem* examination of his Majesty's remains, considered that his Majesty had been poisoned at the Duchess of Portsmouth's, was one of the most learned men of the time. It was his constant saying, that his gold-headed cane, which he carried in his hand, knew more of the art of the physician than all the other doctors, his rivals of the day. Mr. Ardenell, you must not judge of the wisdom, any more than of the gravity of the Lowers, by my nephew, who, though he has the honour to be of their blood, never can be either wise or serious on any subject."

"Pardon me, aunt," said the captain, "I am both when I profess how much I admire old Sir Thomas Joinacre's daughter, the rose of Roseteague and of all Roseland. I am half in love with her already, and could be wholly if I thought she would not disdain such a rough son of the ocean as myself. I have almost a mind to do what the Cornish lubbers do, consult St. Maderne's well, and spell out my future destiny by the bubbles in the pool. That is, if I did but know the right time of the moon for the mystic consultation."

"An idle superstition," I said; "do you in these parts believe in such vain follies?"

"I do not know, young gentleman," said Mrs. Lower, "that they are altogether such superstitious follies as you seem to think them. There have been extraordinary revelations made at particular times by our Cornish wells, more especially in these
There are no such wells, I believe, in all the world as

those of Cornwall. Indeed, scarcely is there a crystal fountain or a limpid spring found in a sequestered spot in our county, but it has its legend, and, like the Castalian fountain of old, is generally held prophetic. You will be charmed with this vicinity when you know it better. And as I see you take an interest in the country around us, I propose that my nephew, who is younger than myself and a better walker, shall show you to-morrow morning the most remarkable points in our views."

To this proposal I thankfully assented.

"And now, Mr. Ardenell," said the old lady, "we must retire to rest, or my nephew will fancy we merit a visit from Janny Tregagle himself for keeping such late hours. It is past twelve o'clock; I am seldom out of my bed after ten. But your company and conversation, Mr. Ardenell, have been so very agreeable (the old lady had talked herself nearly all the evening) that I have been beguiled into a forgetfulness of the hours. I hope to enjoy many such pleasant ones in your society, and shall always be glad to see you at my house. You are going to-morrow to Sir Thomas Joinacre's. I advise you to take care of your heart and to be prudent. Miss Sabina is very pretty, but young, and her father is particular. So good-night, gentlemen. You, Mr. Ardenell, are a clergyman, I need not advise you; but my nephew is a sailor, I hope he will remember to ask a blessing on the rest he is about to seek."

So saying, she lighted her taper, bowed to us both, and left the room.

CHAPTER VI.

" I know not how it is ;
 But a foreboding presses on my heart,
 At times, until I sicken. I have heard,
 And from men learned, that before the touch
 (The common coarser touch) of good or ill,
 Ofttimes a subtler sense informs
 Some spirits of the approach of things to be."

PROCTOR'S *Mirandola*.

HAVING nothing better to do to get rid of the time between breakfast and dinner, on the next morning Captain Lower led me forth to show me something of the vicinity of St. Maws ; a little town which stood so close to the shore that the rocks and the waves came up to the houses, or rather the houses had been thus raised to neighbour them. St. Maws can boast the dignity of possessing a castle ; a strong but low edifice, erected by King Henry the Eighth for the defence of the harbour, which is a very fine one.

With true sailor-like feeling, all the views Captain Lower took me to admire were near the sea ; for an inland prospect seemed to him the dullest thing in nature. He conducted me to the headland of Pennare, which rises five hundred feet above the shore. Its lofty summit commands the whole of Garran's Bay, that lies outstretched below. The distant points of land, and even the Rame Head, in faint outline, appear on a clear day touched with those exquisite tints which the air and the flitting lights and shadows from the shifting clouds, as they float above, can alone produce. A bold range of cliffs is seen skirting the shore, wild, broken, and irregular ; and the sea, spreading itself out in great extent with indescribable majesty, forms a lofty horizon, full of grandeur. Pendennis Castle, which stands at the extremity of the peninsula that runs from Falmouth Harbour into the Atlantic, can also be descried from the heights of Pennare.

There is a vastness in the extent of ocean, when seen from such a height, which is impressive. It raises in the mind those

feelings of awe that always accompany the contemplation of simple objects to which are annexed ideas of power and of dread. When thus viewed, the immensity of ocean makes a man feel his own insignificance, and not himself, but his God becomes the subject of his thoughts. Captain Lower pointed out to me, towards the east, a headland bearing the dismal name of *Dead-man's Point*; and near the shore, fronting the lofty site on which we stood, the Gull Rock appears in insulated grandeur. The sea-mews or gulls that there make their abode, and give the rock its name, fly wheeling and screaming around it, more especially before a coming storm. From Pennare is also seen that wild broken and dark reef called the Manacles, whose rocks look like fragments of the ruin of a former world. This reef, extending itself nearly a mile from the shore into the sea, has, on many occasions, proved fatal to the tempest-tossed bark and her unhappy crew. The very thoughts of shipwreck are dreadful; and, accustomed as I had been to indulge in the day-dreams of imagination, I could not look on those stern enemies of humanity without feelings something akin to those with which we look on the axe and the block as implements kept apart for death, and only waiting the sentence of the judge and the hand of the executioner to consign their victim to his fate.

Near Pennare, in Garran's Bay, is a most beautiful cove, called Parada Cove, which, Captain Lower told me, bore an ill name, as a place of shelter and convenience for smugglers. On the adjacent shore were scattered numberless rocks, over which at high tide the waves broke in foam and fury. Amongst the cliffs at the base of Pennare were many deep black caverns, wild and striking in their forms, where the waves, roaring and striving within the unseen recesses, suggested to the mind thoughts of sea-monsters in their caves, ready to issue forth on errands of destruction against all who dared approach their unhallowed cells.

The inland scene was no less remarkable, comprising all the form and variety that constitute beauty and grandeur. Hills, lofty and abrupt, descended into valleys of exquisite loveliness, watered by the purest streams and rills. Here and there stood an ancient mansion, the dwelling of some one of the old county families, embosomed in the finest woods and groves; while creeks, running up from the sea into the land, lay shining in the sun in their quiet course.

Thence I viewed an object which had a greater interest for me than all else that could be observed from the spot—the mansion of Roseteague. Enclosed by woods, which, resting on the gentle slope of a hill, seemed to creep down to the sea-shore and almost to meet its waves, stood the old dwelling. I know not how it was, whether it were my natural shyness of temper and dislike of change, or my mother's prejudices, or that the papers of Treville Crewse had made a deeper impression on my feelings than I was myself aware, or whether I was out of spirits and saw most things without hope ; but, whatever might be the cause, I was now most strangely affected. Yes, beautiful as Roseteague appeared to me when I first looked upon it from Pennare, the sight of it gave me a feeling by no means pleasurable, and a sort of chill stole through my veins, as I said to my friend Captain Lower, who pointed it out to me,—

“There is my new home, but if for joy or for sorrow time only can unfold.”

It was on the morning after I had first looked upon it from a distance that I made my appearance at Roseteague. The approach to the house was pleasing, through a long avenue of lofty trees, principally of beech and elm, which, from their size and the cawing of the dusky tribe that made their nests in the topmost branches, had an antiquated air, in harmony with the mansion and its precincts. The former was evidently of the time of Elizabeth ; some obscure parts of it, however, I afterwards found, were of a much earlier date. It was large and substantial, but a sombre dwelling, with a wide porch, and somewhat small and heavy mullioned windows. Though without any surrounding court and wall, yet was it capable of defence from within ; and the lower apartments, as in many Continental houses, were barred with iron.

● The garden at the back of the house was in the French style of Louis XIV., so frequently imitated in England about the time of Queen Anne. It consisted principally of a succession of terraces, rising the one above the other, ornamented with large vases, flowering shrubs, and statues of gods, goddesses, and Cupids, cast in lead, or cut in stone. The woods, which surrounded the mansion, except towards the sea, stood on hilly ground. Many walks ran about them, being cut through their intricacies with very good effect, and afforded on a summer's day the most pleasing solitudes, impervious to the sun, with canopies of over-arching boughs. The descent to the sea-beach

below the house was gradual, and the mansion itself lay open in front to the ocean and commanded a view of it from every window.

I was ushered into an apartment, which I saw immediately by the books around, with the heads of many a Greek and Roman worthy fixed above the shelves, was the library. The very antiquated appearance of the massive tomes, with that peculiar smell of must which generally accompanies the learned stores of our forefathers, assured me that few productions of modern literature were here to be found.

As I stood looking about with much curiosity, all at once I heard something stir, and on turning to see what it could be, observed standing close at my back an elderly man, who, I felt convinced, as it were by intuition, was Sir Thomas Joinacre himself.

I was at first startled by his approach, as I had not seen him enter the room; but the glance which discovered him to me also detected a small flight of stairs, something in the fashion of a ladder, which stood in a remote and dusky corner of the library, leading from an apartment above. These stairs being thickly carpeted, and my thoughts busied with the bookshelves, the steps of the master of the mansion had been unheard by me, as he thus descended.

I cannot tell how it was, but his coming thus stealthily upon me gave such a shock to my feelings which it would be impossible for me to describe. I felt as I can conceive a man would feel upon whom a wily animal of prey steals softly and unexpectedly. That he should thus take me by surprise I thought was neither manly nor proper; and from that moment my very blood seemed to receive a prejudice against him, which I could never wholly overcome.

Influenced by its effects, I have no doubt that I now saw him under the most unfavourable bias. I did not like the first glance I had of his countenance, and yet I could ill define what there was in it to find fault with, as the features were regular and those of a very handsome man, the eye clear and uncommonly bright for one of his years, and the complexion florid and healthy.

But, notwithstanding all this, I took offence at his countenance. The forehead was rather low, and the brows much overhung the eyes, which were deep set, and seldom looked at you other than askant. The mouth, too, was small, thin-lipped, and

pursed or drawn at the corners ; and the lower jaw slightly projected beyond the upper. The face, thus unpleasing under its calm and ordinary expression, was most especially disagreeable to me when he smiled—for he contrived to smile on seeing me start at his strange mode of approach ; there was an expression of pleasure in it, but it was the pleasure of mischief.

No doubt this was a very fanciful and exaggerated judgment for a first interview. But all my life long I had been the creature of impulse, of strong first views and prejudices, and neither conceived my likes or dislikes with due moderation. I did not sufficiently consider that it was my duty to be temperate in all things, more especially in my judgment of others, seeing that it is a matter of charity which comes very near the heart.

Sir Thomas Joinacre had the air of a man of station, a gentleman by birth and education. He was habited richly, not ostentatiously, in a maroon suit of cut velvet with gold lace. He wore no wig, but his own white hair hung in thin silky curls round his brows and head, leaving the crown bald, smooth, and shining, like any ball of ivory. In his address there was more of dignity than I should have given him credit for possessing ; and his voice, clear and of the most distinct utterance, was not unmusical. His speech was courteous, and he seemed always to think before he spoke. But though the manner was not unpleasing, it was too entirely manner to please me. Under ordinary circumstances it was ever the same, never varied ; there was nothing of feeling in it. Sir Thomas Joinacre was not the man to forget himself in the subject of his discourse ; he never let the interest of it carry him away ; never talked himself into warmth of feeling for you, or you into familiarity with him ; there was always a bar of reserve, of distance between you. I felt that I could not have bounded over that bar of distance as I could with a man, however much my superior, who had a heart about him, under any circumstances whatever. This was the last sort of character I should have chosen to find in a patron with whom I must come into daily contact.

But Providence had thought fit as much to cross me in respect of my new employer, as I had been favoured in my former one—the good old rector.

My readers must not fancy that I came to all these conclusions on the first glance I gave at Sir Thomas Joinacre's face, or by the first sentences he spoke : far from it. I have stated what



were my first general impressions respecting him ; but he and I were long together. and with those impressions I here blend the thoughts and feelings of many a succeeding day.

He was very civil to me ; made the usual inquiries after my health, journey, &c. ; very briefly told me what would be my duties as chaplain in his family : and to my extreme surprise added, that, as those ministerial duties would be so light, and, as he trusted, my remuneration not unhandsome, he hoped I would not object to act in some measure as a tutor to his child, who had a great thirst after good letters, and whom I should find most ready and docile in all matters relating to the tongues and to learning.

I replied that I had not anticipated being called upon to act as tutor as well as chaplain in his family ; but that certainly the salary being so considerable, I could not be so thankless as to refuse his request. I would therefore give lessons in the classics, mathematics, or general literature, as he might require, and begged to know what might be the age of the young gentleman I was to instruct.

“ Young gentleman ! ” exclaimed Sir Thomas with surprise, “ do you not know that I have no son ? It is my daughter, my only daughter, a woman grown, for whom I require your assistance in the cultivation of a very lively, apt, indeed a very uncommon mind.”

I expressed my astonishment ; it may well be believed it was great at hearing the sex of my intended pupil. And shall I confess it ? (the goodnatured reader will allow something for youth and vanity)—I was amazed at his choosing to confide to a young man like myself such a charge. He could not know (for none but my mother and sister knew the truth) how deeply my affections were engaged to Maria. How then could Sir Thomas be so confident in me, or so imprudent, as to propose his daughter passing some hours every day in the close and pleasing intercourse which the study of literature must inevitably bring about between two young persons of opposite sexes, who were both attached to such pursuits ? It was strange, too, that he should never have intimated to me a word on the subject till I had accepted the chaplaincy and was actually in his house ; giving me no time for deliberation, but face to face proposing to me a thing it was impossible that I, as a gentleman, could refuse, when the salary he had previously engaged to pay me was so unusually large.

However, I had not been very long an inmate in the family before I found this was Sir Thomas Joinacre's manner of dealing ; he had always a something in reserve in all his bargains. If he bought a cow, he must have her calf thrown in for the money ; his bailiff at the farm must act as headman over the gardener at Roseteague ; and his chaplain must take the duties of a tutor into the account. In my case, however, there was certainly no hardship. He seemed well pleased at my ready acquiescence, and taking up his gold-headed walking-staff, and putting on a very small three-cornered hat, proposed to show me a little about the place, to which, he assured me, I was welcome, and where he hoped I had come to live happily both for his family and for myself. Before conducting me without doors, he led me to an antiquated apartment on the ground floor, which was to be my study, showed me an adjoining closet appropriated to my books, and my sleeping-room above, a large and pleasant chamber from which I had a view of the sea and the woods. Sir Thomas next conducted me through the French garden, opened a small door of which he had the key, and, after pointing out to me the nearest way to the sea-beach, entered another and more winding path through the woods. As we advanced, I heard the most delightful strains of music ; and, stopping a moment to listen, could distinguish a voice accompanied by the twang of a guitar, and, as I thought, a second voice in harmony with, though of a deeper tone, than the first.

I looked at Sir Thomas Joinacre, as I listened, who, answering my thoughts more than my speech—for I had merely uttered an exclamation—replied,—

“It is my daughter and a youth who lives in my family and acts as my secretary—they are at their practice ; they have good voices, and often sing together in parts.”

I was again surprised ; and the thought that a young girl, who had no mother living, should be thus thrown into the familiar society of the other sex, crossed even my inexperienced mind as a thing very unusual for ladies of family and station. The more so in the present instance, as the father bore the character of being a prudent and somewhat suspicious man. But I soon found there was an abundance of contradiction, as well as of mystery, in all his ways.

On turning short round the path we were pursuing, we came in front of a thatched rustic building, overshadowed by the loftiest forest-trees, which commanded a view of the rocks and

the sea-shore through an opening in the woods. Sir Thomas stepped forward ; I could not but pause, ere I entered the summer-house, to look on the picture which was presented to me at that moment—and I wish that Sir Godfrey Kneller instead of myself had been there, to have secured it on canvas. I can but write down what I saw in my own homely manner, feeling how poor are mere words to supply the place of the pencil ; its lines of grace, its touches of expression, the rich glow of its colours, and its power to fix, despite the ravages of time, the fleeting charms of early womanhood and the matchless fascinations of youthful beauty.

Within the rustic building sat the daughter of Sir Thomas Joinacre. She was about twenty years old, but from her extreme delicacy of form and feature, and the sylph-like lightness of her air, looked not more than seventeen. She was what they call in France a *blonde* beauty ; that is, her hair was light and her complexion of transparent purity. The sweetest tinge of red was in her cheek ; I could compare it to nothing less than the crimson glow which just touches the morning cloud, or to the rose in its most chastened bloom. Her features were small, and, as a poet would say (and I had a smattering of poetry in my youth), her mouth seemed formed for the Cupids to hang upon it, as bees do upon the opening buds. Her smile was the smile of love itself ; her eyes, large, full, and penetrating, shaded by a long and dark fringe of eyelashes, had in them the fire of genius and the softness of affection.

With all her father's features, she was nevertheless singularly unlike him. Her face looked as if modelled after his, but on a smaller and more delicate scale. And now I perceived how striking may be the likeness between two persons the most opposite in character. Whilst the resemblance in features may be close, the difference principally arises from that expression which the human countenance receives from the mind alone ; so that the characteristic expression may be different in one person from what it is in another, whilst the face of both may be much the same in form, symmetry, and proportions.

Hair of the lightest, richest brown hung in a thousand clustering curls round the pretty neck and ivory forehead of this beautiful girl. She was dressed with great neatness and taste, yet simply, having on a pale-blue silk gown and sack, with no hoop, and a Brussels cap and ruffles ; and no other ornaments than a black velvet bracelet, with the miniature of a lady at its

clasp, which made the white arm it encircled look still fairer from the contrast.

She was playing the guitar, while a youth about seventeen years old, who stood near, with a face and person strikingly manly and handsome, accompanied her in the following song :—

“ When, mid roses,
Love reposes,
Though his sparkling eye he closes,
Still he sees each object round :
And whilst blinking,
Still he’s thinking
How to deal the treacherous wound.

“ He, whilst seeming
To be dreaming,
And with feigned terror screaming,
Springs and seizes swift his dart,
Though not near him,
You may fear him—
Know, his aim is at your heart.”

“ And that lovely young creature is to be my pupil,” thought I, whilst for a moment I gazed upon her with delight at the sight of such perfection. “ Oh ! Maria, well is it for me that the remembrance of thee has placed a shield upon my heart, so that I can look even on this creature with calm delight, without any other emotion than such as I fancy I should experience did I behold an angel ; a being bright, indeed, but of another sphere.” Scarcely had these thoughts passed rapidly through my mind, when Sir Thomas Joinacre introduced me to his daughter, as Mr. Ardenell, the worthy young gentleman (so was he pleased to designate me) whose arrival he had looked for with so much expectancy to benefit him and all his family, in my ministration as chaplain.

The young lady rose from her seat, bowed, and bade me welcome in the most graceful manner ; the few words she uttered being softly spoken, and in a voice as harmonious as her song. My patron next made me known to the youth he called his secretary, introducing him to me as Mr. Charles Tregidiar, a young gentleman for whom he had a particular esteem, and who was a relative of Mrs. Lower, with whom I had been staying a few days before I came to Roseteague.

After some commonplace talk we all proceeded to the house, and I spent the remainder of the morning in unpacking my books and baggage, and making myself ready to commence my

new office by pronouncing the blessing before we sat down to dinner. The evening passed in agreeable discourse concerning that part of the country to which I was come as a stranger, the families around, the character of the peasantry, and other topics. At length I read the prayers to the household assembled in the hall, and retired to rest, having altogether got very well through my first day at Roseteague.

CHAPTER VII.

"For lover's eyes more sharply sighted be
Than other men's, and in dear love's delight
See more than any other eyes can see."

SPENSER.

It is not my intention in this narrative to trouble the reader with any particulars which, though of interest to myself, might not be so to him. Hence is it that I pass in silence all details respecting the first six months of my residence at Roseteague, and go at once to their results, in the thoughts they awakened in my mind, and the peculiar position in which they seemed to have placed me at the end of that period.

The reader is aware of the sudden and unexpected manner in which I had been called on by Sir Thomas Joinacre to act in the capacity of tutor to his daughter. I hope I may say that I did not abuse the trust, for such it was, committed to my charge. I looked on the mind of this young creature as a gem it was my duty to polish and to guard with the most delicate watchfulness ; and I was well requited for my pains, not only by the rapid progress she made in her studies, but by the ingenuous esteem, the friendship with which she honoured me, and that friendship was to me most precious. Let not the reader smile at this assertion of an intimacy of such a nature subsisting between a lovely young girl little more than nineteen, and a young man of five and twenty. It is quite true that we were fast friends and nothing more.

My own experience has taught me to believe that such an union between the opposite sexes has in it something peculiarly pleasing, ennobling to man, endearing to woman. Such an union of souls may be considered as love of a more subdued nature ; love without the turmoil of passion, and freed from all the anxieties of jealousy, doubt, or fear. Men often call a male companion a friend ; but when the hour of trial comes, not unfrequently do they find their mistake. From a knowledge of the world, its dangers and deceits, man—when serving another

—stirs slowly and with caution; but with woman there is neither coldness nor calculation; whilst man deliberates, she decides; and from the livelier motion of her spirits, and the greater tenderness of her heart, acts with zeal as well as generosity.

A devoted friendship between man and man becomes a subject for universal admiration. The names of the individuals are handed down from generation to generation, as objects for our praise; and Orestes and Pylades, and David and Jonathan will be repeated with honour as long as the world exists. But there are no such records for special note in history in respect to woman; because for woman to be devoted to any one of the affections, be it of filial piety, or conjugal or maternal love, or friendship, is a thing so common that it ceases to be a matter of wonder.

I do not know how the idea first presented itself to my mind, but I had not been very long at Roseteague before I entertained a suspicion of so strange a nature that, to any rational mind, it would seem the wildest of fancies and little founded on probability. I entertained then the suspicion that Sir Thomas Joinacre wanted to bring about an attachment between myself and his daughter. And in saying this, in order that I may stand excused from a charge of unparalleled extravagance and folly, I shall endeavour to state, as far as it is capable of statement, the nature of Sir Thomas's conduct towards me and the young lady, with my own observations of his character and demeanour.

No sooner was I appointed his daughter's tutor than, as a considerate master, I proposed stated hours for the lessons I was to give my pupil, naturally concluding that Sir Thomas, or, at least, his secretary (who from his youth, good-nature, and sprightly humour was a favourite with all the house) would be present. But so far was this from being the case, that I more than once detected my patron keeping apart the lad, or any one likely to interrupt us; whilst (most probably for appearance sake) he affected to intend sitting himself in the room during our lessons. But no sooner was he seated than, somehow or other, he always contrived to remember something he had forgotten to do,—a matter of business, a letter to be indited, or what not, to get out of the room, and leave the young lady and myself together for as long or as short a time as we pleased.

On these occasions she would often blush and say, "My dear

father, you are not going away?" as if reluctant to be left by him ; or she would offer to go and do anything he wished should be done, so that he might but remain to give his countenance to her studies. And then, if we all strolled out together to the woods, or on the sea-shore, old Sir Thomas would contrive to walk with his youthful secretary, to lead him into conversation, and to keep so much behind the young lady and myself, that for all the purposes of intimacy in discourse we were as much *tête-à-tête* as if no one were with us. And on all occasions if Sabina asked an opinion of a book, or sought to gain information on any general subject, by a very winding yet seemingly natural order of things Sir Thomas would refer her to me as the authority from which she was to derive whatever knowledge she desired to gain. In our little parties of pleasure (for we had such, even in this sober household), or on any great day at the mansion, Sabina seemed always to be committed to my care ; so that, as a gentleman, I could do no less than give my attention almost exclusively to herself.

What Sabina thought of all this will presently appear. I must say, that though towards me she had a most delicate part to sustain, she observed it with all that exquisite tact which a woman of nice feeling, great warmth of heart, and uncommon talents could alone call into play. Whilst to me she was ever gentle, kind, and amiable, yet with her little acts of courtesy she blended that slight shade of reserve which, had I been disposed to forget it (though I was not), would have preserved a certain degree of distance between us, and have kept aloof all approach to any nearer intimacy than such as the most plain and open friendship could warrant. I was glad it was so ; for, although I most highly esteemed and admired her, I had no more of the passion of love in my bosom for Sabina than she had for me.

My esteem was founded on my knowledge of her many excellent qualities ; and as for my admiration of her, it was nothing more than a matter of taste. I beheld her beauty with feelings akin to those with which I was wont to look upon a fine portrait by a Vandyke or a Kneller, though none of their pictures could equal the face now hourly before my view, because the living countenance of beauty can never be equalled by the painter's skill. One moment of time must ever be the limit of his art, and whatever may be the feeling depicted in his subject, it remains unaltered for ever. If we look on the face we love in its picture, and it there smiles upon us, that smile continues

the same in the hours of our deepest sorrow, and there seems no sympathy in the object with ourselves. But the ever-changing expression of a living human countenance constitutes its greatest charm, and such a charm as no art can reach.

My eyes told me that in point of beauty of feature and complexion my poor Maria could not compete with Sabina; yet, in opposition to my judgment, my taste led me to give the preference, even in personal attraction, to her I loved. There was a charm in the countenance of Maria which I looked for in vain in Sabina. Maria's eyes seemed to look at you as if at a glance they read and understood your feelings; they seemed to penetrate the inmost thoughts of your mind, and to respond to them in affection and kindness. There was also an expression about her mouth, in the play of her lips and the mildness of her aspect, of such ineffable sweetness that a painter, who endeavoured to portray it, might as well attempt "to paint the perfume" that gives sweetness to the rose. My mother used to say that Maria's face could be copied, but no artist could hit off her *countenance*, meaning its expression.

But though Sabina and I were thus mutually indifferent, there was another individual of the family for whom, strange as it may appear, I could not help suspecting she entertained feelings of a very different character, and that individual was the youth who acted as her father's secretary.

Sabina was the elder by about three years; and that circumstance, together with her being the mistress of the family and the daughter of his master, gave her an authority over the youth which was daily brought into action. He was so much under her care that she appeared to look on him with a sort of watchful affection, as she would on a younger brother; and in all things he looked up to her with a fondness which delighted to show itself in observance, in deference. He seemed to hang on her words, to interpret her looks, and to find happiness in the thought that he could do nothing without her. Whilst on her part, in the midst of that authority, I have noticed there were signs and symptoms of her being on some occasions disturbed or agitated by his presence in a way little consistent with the ease and dignity of a superior. It was evident she shunned singing a duet with him, if the subject were one of love. And if sometimes urged by any one present to take her part in such a melody with the young secretary, and she could not without discourtesy refuse, she would sing indeed, but her voice would

often falter, and neither time nor touch were true, whilst her cheek would glow with the deepest crimson.

I confess it, my curiosity was strongly awakened by all the circumstances that I witnessed and the observations I made ; I was anxious to learn what was the real state of things, and fearful that more than common difficulties would be the end of mysteries so painful.

CHAPTER VIII.

"He lower'd on him with dangerous eye-glance,
Showing his nature in his countenance;
His rolling eies did never rest in place,
But walkte each where for feare of hid mischaunce,
Holding a lattis still before his face,
Through which he still did peep as forward he did pace."

SPENSER.

It was about the time when the circumstances I have just narrated began most to engage my attention that, one day, whilst searching for a book I wanted for Sabina in the shelves of her father's library, I stumbled on an old volume, containing the original Latin letters of Abelard and Eloisa.

The thought passed across my mind that I would make this book the means of searching out, if I could, old Sir Thomas's designs about me and his daughter; if he really entertained any concerning us, as I had been led to suspect from his, otherwise, incomprehensible conduct.

Accordingly, after some casual remarks on the book, its Latinity, and the edition, I thus opened my masked battery:—

"I think, Sir Thomas, the fame of Abelard stands too high with posterity; for if closely examined we shall find his merits very doubtful. Pity for his misfortunes might in some measure soften the deserved censure of his faults; but it went too far, in my opinion, when it changed those faults into virtues."

"How so?" replied Sir Thomas. "Abelard was a great scholar and a pious monk; a wise abbot of most exemplary rule."

"Yes, Sir Thomas, but a perpetual disputant, and one who often contended not so much for truth as for superiority. And then, sir, I think he forfeited all claim to be considered a man of honour."

"How so? how so?" reiterated my patron.

"By abusing the confidence reposed in him, when by an unsuspecting uncle his young and beautiful niece was confided

to his care as a preceptor. He should have thrown up the trust if he felt it was too much for his honesty ; but he should not have kept it and abused it."

Sir Thomas looked confused, paused before he answered, and then said hastily,—

"But you forget he married Eloisa."

"True," I replied ; "but not till the just indignation of others, loudly expressed on his violation of the trust reposed in him, in some measure compelled Abelard to that step. And it seems to me, if I may be permitted to give my opinion without reserve, scarcely a well-considered action, at best a very imprudent one, on the part of Fulbert, the uncle of Eloisa, to place so young a man as Abelard in his house, and to constitute him the tutor of a young and beautiful niece."

I thought Sir Thomas looked displeased at this freedom ; that he felt I had aimed a dart at himself, though from a bow apparently drawn at a venture. I cannot tell how it was I thus spoke ; I was astonished at my own freedom, for hitherto on most occasions the gloomy reserve of my patron's character, his shrewd and observant eye, and his cold and cautious manner had the effect of chilling my warmth of feeling, or of awing me into silence in his presence. But to-day I seemed to myself as if I had got above my fear of him ; and that my consciousness of honest dealing and unembarrassed sentiment gave me the vantage-ground. I was bold, whilst some latent purpose, some fears of being detected in a secret design (which he would fain have work its own way), made *him* the coward ; for, instead of giving me one of its furtive glances, his eye shunned mine, as he said,—

"I think it not improbable, had Abelard acted an honourable part at first, and asked Fulbert to give him his niece in marriage, instead of seducing her from the paths of virtuous discretion, the uncle would have given his consent to so learned a man. Abelard and Eloisa might have wedded in the ordinary way, and would have lived and died happily, though the world had never heard their names in the fashion of a love-story."

"But, Sir Thomas," I said, "Fulbert was a rich man, and bore the character of being a dear lover of money ; and Abelard, though a great scholar, was, comparatively at least, a poor man, certainly so at the time to which you refer. Fulbert would have rejected such a pretender to his niece's hand with contempt."

"Ay, so judges an unthinking world," replied Sir Thomas,

"and so you judge. But, young gentleman, there are those who, though they keep with all diligence (with a purpose of wise thrift, in order to expend and bestow it prudently hereafter) wealth which, by Heaven's bounty and favourable occasion, is put into their hands, yet are not so sordidly inclined in respect to the disposal of the issue of their blood as you would make it appear. I know there are those who would not make a barter of honourable marriage, and who would think a staid youth of gentle blood, of good discretion, and neither wanting in good letters, nor good manners, a more worthy mate for a daughter—were she an only daughter and dear as the life-drops that warm the heart—than the greatest prince in Christendom wanting such qualities."

"I rejoice, Sir Thomas," I replied, "to hear you say this. In an age when so much of worldly feeling, and more especially in matters of marriage, sways the motives of the first and noblest families in the land, it gives joy to my very heart to find one father of rank and wealth such as to render his example of great and good effect, disclaim all sordid views in the disposal of his child. It does indeed give me the highest satisfaction.

"Does it?" exclaimed Sir Thomas, smiling as well as his face could smile, as he raised his eyes, and gave me a look, as if he would read my most secret thoughts; and perceiving, I believe, nothing sinister in my countenance, he rubbed his hands, as he said with a sort of chuckle he could not suppress (thinking, I conclude, he was sure of his purpose), "You see, then, how hardly you judged me."

"Judged you! Sir Thomas," I exclaimed. "I never presumed to judge you when I spoke of the uncle of Eloisa." His countenance fell, and he looked for a moment confused, but not confounded; for, recovering himself speedily, he added, without a pause,—

"But you spoke of a preceptor—and I have a daughter; and I placed you near her as a preceptor for the cultivation of her mind, and—"

"And most richly has the young lady repaid my pains," I said, "by the improvement she has made, and by the grace and docility with which she has received my lessons. I can assure you, Sir Thomas, that to instruct so amiable and so rare a mind has been to me a pleasure, such as I think I should have experienced could I have prevailed with my own sister to become my pupil."

I made this answer off-hand, because I would not suffer Sir Thomas to go further, or to fancy that I had the slightest desire to ask or to win his daughter, either with or without his consent. He said nothing more in reply than that he was glad I felt so well satisfied with her progress and her behaviour towards me, and that he, as her father, was quite satisfied with my pains.

Yet, though this was said with all due courtesy, I fancied he looked vexed, if not disappointed. But Sir Thomas was too much the master of himself, when once on his guard, to betray any emotion he thought it right to conceal. Still he lingered, and looked as if something more yet to be spoken hung on his mind, if not on his lips ; and I, who had by this time talked myself out of all fear, made one step further ; but that I soon found was a somewhat too bold one, and touched on dangerous ground.

"What a fine youth is the lad you have made your secretary, Sir Thomas !" I said. "How generous is his nature, how excellent his parts, how affectionate his disposition ! He is quite the friend, the playfellow of your fair daughter. With sentiments of so much generosity as those you, Sir Thomas, have displayed, it would not surprise me did I one day see you rejoice in the probability that Charles Tregidiar might become to you a son indeed, by the dearest bond of union."

If I had before damped the expectations of my patron, as I could not but think I had, with something of disappointment in relation to myself, I had now most unwittingly outraged them. For a moment his anger was roused into a flame, and burst forth, like fire struck by steel from flint, with the sudden blow which I had given to his hard but fierce nature. He glanced upon me a withering look, as if he would have struck me to the earth, whilst he said in a tone of mingled scorn and bitterness,—

"What ! Charles Tregidiar, think you, wed my daughter ! the beggarly bastard of an unknown father ! He ask me for my child ! I would" (added Sir Thomas, raising his hand and opening its fingers, and then clasping them again together with a sudden clench, as if acting the thought of his mind)—"did he dare but name my daughter in the way of marriage—I would seize him by the hair, and send him headlong over the cliffs, to feast the sea-fowl and the sharks in requital of his presumption."

I was astonished ; I stood silent, unable to offer a word in

reply—absolutely overawed by such a burst of passion as I had no notion till that moment that Sir Thomas was capable of exhibiting. I was now alarmed on another score, lest my random remarks about the poor boy should be the means of drawing down his patron's anger upon him ; and, by awakening his suspicions, cause Sir Thomas not only to withdraw from him his regard, but his employment also. I hastened, therefore, to make matters up as well as I could, and assured Sir Thomas that what I had said was only the casual and inconsiderate remark of an idle moment, and that I had no intention of its being taken in such severe sense.

"I know it, sir," he said, somewhat recovered from his first passion. "Had there been cause to apprehend any such matter as you hinted at but now, I had never hatched the egg in my nest that should send forth a reptile to my own injury. No, sir, I have no fear. The youth is a good simple youth, who was commended to my service by Mrs. Lower. He fills the office of secretary with all diligence, and is useful and full of honesty."

"Indeed, Sir Thomas, he is. I am convinced that in all things you may confidently trust him."

"I know that, sir, quite well," replied Sir Thomas, "or I had never trusted him at all. And as for my Sabina, you as little know the spirit of my daughter as you do that of her father if you fancy she is the girl to wed with a youth, the son, maybe, of a father as worthless as he is unknown. My daughter looks upon the youth as she does upon her lute ; he helps her in her song to amuse an idle hour. Or if she walks, she takes him as her guard in the woods or among the rocks, he being something more intelligent than the dog that follows her steps,—Charles Tregidiar and my daughter, indeed !"

Again I apologized, and was at length pardoned and dismissed with an air of ill-assumed forgiveness. I saw he was very bitter in his feelings against me, and that the hour in which I had failed to make him my friend (Heaven could alone tell wherefore he should desire me for such) in all probability had made him my enemy, and that for ever.

In the midst of all these considerations nothing surprised me so much as his blindness about his daughter and the youth Charles. But plotting and cunning men, who fancy they can see future consequences from causes which are the coinage of their own brain, frequently overlook the most obvious circumstances that lie directly before them, when they exist in opposi-

tion to their own views. A man of a suspicious temper, if he be also of an arbitrary nature, in some instances does not suspect simply because he thinks his will alone is sufficient to prevent the existence of that which is obnoxious to him. He becomes therefore wilfully blind ; and this was the case with Sir Thomas in respect to his secretary's growing passion for the lovely Sabina.

CHAPTER IX.

“There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
 There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
 There is society, where none intrudes,
 By the deep sea, and music in its roar :
 I love not man the less, but nature more,
 From these our interviews, in which I steal
 From all I may be, or have been before.”

CHILDE HAROLD, *Canto 4th.*

I HAD been so much disturbed by what had passed, that on quitting the library I could not immediately compose my thoughts ; and, putting on my hat as I passed through the hall, I determined to stroll down to the sea-shore, there to recover myself before I appeared in the presence of Sabina and the family at supper. Were it not for such a purpose there was no temptation to walk abroad, for the evening was heavy and lowering, the sky of a dull grey, and a gathering mist seemed in some degree to anticipate in its effects the twilight of an autumn day.

The sea was in gloom, with partial gleams of a cold and sickly light ; as the rays of the departing sun here and there struggled through the openings of thick and dense clouds. The pale gleams of light appeared to give a deeper hue to the broad shadows which rested on the bosom of the ocean, even as a passing joy appears to break in upon the sorrows of an overburdened breast, only to make their weight the more sensibly felt by the force of contrast. There was something grand in this sombre display of the elements. The winds and waves were disturbed, but not with any violent motion ; for there was more of power than of agitation in the strong and lofty swell, the rising and rolling of the billows, as they broke on the shore ; whilst in the monotonous moaning of the winds, that swept over the face of the deep, there were the sounds of complaint, but nothing of the fury or the gust of the tempest.

I soon found my way down to the beach, and strolled on until I came under the heights of Pennare. There, indeed, I felt the

awe-imposing scene, the grandeur of the impending headland, and of those cliffs within whose dark recesses and hollows, as the tide rushed in, the waves boomed and broke with the force of subterranean thunder. The rocks which, imbedded in the sand and stretching themselves far out into the sea, skirted this formidable shore could now alone be traced by the boiling foam that covered them, except where here and there, on the receding of the wave, they reared their heads like the blackened towers of a ruined city sunk below the deep. The sea-birds wheeled and screamed aloft, and nothing was seen on the interminable ocean but one solitary boat, that with much struggling and striving was making her way through wind, wave, and surf towards the cove celebrated for giving shelter to the desperate traffickers of a desperate trade. I watched the progress of this adventurous bark till the projecting headland concealed her from sight, and then I turned to leave the beach, and to retrace my steps slowly homeward. The gloom of the sullen sky, and the flitting lights that ever and anon broke its monotony, heightened the solemnity of the scene ; the woods of Roseteague, that stood towards the west, were in profound shade, bending their tops before the steady force of the rising wind. As I watched the majesty with which the old forest-trees rose and bowed their lofty heads, as if in submission to the coming tempest, I revolved in my mind the strange and contradictory character of him who was their master.

Though I will not deny that I did not consider myself altogether contemptible, either in my pretensions as a gentleman or a scholar, yet I do not think I was a vain man, or that I had any overweening opinion of myself. It was not, I felt assured, by any such follies that I was led to suppose Sir Thomas Joinacre had formed some designs respecting his daughter and myself. The signs, therefore, must have been very marked, very unremittingly persevered in, to have attracted my notice or to have excited even the suspicion of their existence in my mind. And now that I thought over the subject, I was the more confirmed in my previous conclusions. He had taken obvious pains to throw us together, to make me become an object of interest, of regard, in Sabina's eyes, and herself of affection in mine.

What could be the motive ? I was lost in vain conjecture. I had neither fortune, connection, nor expectations of any kind to render me an object worth speculating upon in the views of a

far-sighted, avaricious man, such as, notwithstanding all his pretensions to liberality, I felt convinced was the real character of Sir Thomas Joinacre. What, then, could be the motive? For, as for the nonsense he threw out about his respects for my merits, and the like, I knew him too well to be taken by such hollow compliments. Whatever little worth I might possess, I felt quite certain he could not estimate it. For I could not have shown a man so forbidding as himself what there might be in my heart of warmth or of feeling; nor had I been put to any trial of my honesty or my principles that deserved to be called a test in his service. What then could be the motive of his conduct towards me?

Again and again did I ask myself the question, but without the slightest approach to its solution, till my curiosity became painfully, anxiously excited; as of one thing I felt assured—let the motive be what it would which actuated Sir Thomas, it was one of no ordinary nature. It was no light matter that would cause him to endeavour to win any man for his daughter, much less a penniless man. It must be something in which his own benefit, real or imaginary, was deeply involved; and if so, he was not of a character to give up his own interest for a trifle on a first rebuff. For, if in some respects he had the blindness of the mole, he had also the earth-working perseverance of that most indefatigable little miner.

Having failed in an open attempt to lead me to his purpose, I feared he would try another course, and endeavour to involve me and his daughter in some entanglement, some snare from which we could neither of us so readily escape. I resolved, therefore, to be on my guard. Would delicacy, I thought, but permit it, how glad should I feel to give a hint to Sabina of the danger which had spread itself around her on every side! But this was impossible, for how could I warn her against the machinations of her own father? On another point also I felt apprehensive.

On my first coming to Roseteague Sir Thomas had required of me a promise never to withdraw from him on a sudden; that, should I change my plans, I would not leave him till such time as he could gain another chaplain to his mind to supply my place. It now first appeared to me that he entertained some unfathomable motive for gaining from me an engagement such as this. I had given the promise he required, and could not therefore shake off my dependence upon him, till it was his

good pleasure to let me go, happen what would to make me wish it.

My thoughts, as it may well be supposed, were anything but agreeable, when, as I slowly paced on, my attention was suddenly called off from myself by an occurrence which a good deal surprised me at the time, and the more so when I reflected on it afterwards.

There was at Roseteague, as I have before stated, a garden, surmounted by terraces at the back of the house. On account of the style of its decorations, its fountain, &c., it was named the *French Garden*; and as it will hereafter be frequently mentioned, as the scene of some most remarkable circumstances, it becomes necessary I should endeavour to make its position pretty well understood, though it is not an easy matter to do so with the pen.

This garden had at its termination a strong protection wall, which, through a number of thick forest-trees that stood within it, was not perceptible from the walks and terraces, so that it in no instance intruded upon the eye with the formality of brick-work. Yet, when the door which led from the garden into the woods was locked, the wall itself was so high and so guarded with iron spikes that no one could pass over it, either from within or from without.

The part of the house which looked on the French Garden was old and irregular. Every successive master of Roseteague for many generations had added something by way of improvement to the original building; so that there were as many towers or apartments as the convenience or the fashion of every new era in house architecture would admit. Among the former was one called the *King's Tower*, from a tradition, common with many old houses in Cornwall and Devon, that King Charles I., when he fled before the victorious arms of his rebel subjects of the west, had been sheltered for a day and a night in this identical tower. Though at a later period I had my study assigned to me in it, yet at the time of which I am now speaking it was not to my knowledge used by any of the family, and I had never been within it.

I had gained the path in the wood which had for its termination the door in the wall of the French Garden. To this door there were only two keys, Sir Thomas had one, and Sabina the other. On this memorable evening I had Sabina's key in my pocket (she often let me have it in my keeping), and I deter-

mined to return through the garden to the house. I am thus particular, otherwise what I have to relate could not be clearly understood.

At the very moment I was about to strike into the path above named, I saw coming down a cross-path in the wood, that also led from the sea-shore, a man wrapped in such a cloak as persons use on ship board. He wore his hat—which had in it a red feather—a good deal slouched. I cannot tell how it was, but I said to myself, as I looked upon him, I am sure that is one of the men just come on shore from the boat I saw striving through the waters. The hat, as I observed, was pulled over the brows, and the cloak held up very close to the chin, so that I had but an imperfect view of his features. But two things I remarked, even in these moments of sudden encounter : first, that he was a manly-looking man, and wore a moustache on the upper lip ; and that the ungloved hand, which held up the cloak, displayed on one of the fingers a ring of sparkling stones.

I was surprised, and paused, doubtful if to go on or to stop till he came up to me. But on seeing me slacken my pace, he struck into another and a crossing path, and speedily disappeared among the intricate windings of the trees. I thought it strange, but went on a few steps, when I was unexpectedly detained for a short time by meeting an old man, who was the wood-cutter at Roseteague. He was fond of a gossip, and, in order to enjoy one, never failed to intercept my return to the house if he caught sight of me in the woods. On the present occasion I got rid of his gossip as soon as I could, went on, reached the door, used the key, and passed within the precincts of the French Garden.

As I raised my head, after having carefully locked the door, on looking towards the King's Tower (which was in full view from the spot where I stood), I caught sight of the tall figure of a man looking out of a window on the ground floor of that old and unfrequented building. I stood fixed in wonder at a thing so inexplicable, for I saw by the hat and red feather that the wearer was the same individual I had seen in the woods, and who had so evidently shunned observation. How could he have got in ? There was no other doorway from the woods to the garden than that by which I had just entered, and, though I had lost sight of the man with the red feather among the trees, I had never lost sight of the door even whilst detained for a few minutes by the gossip of the wood-feller. And when cut off from the garden entrance there was no other way to gain access

to the old tower, except by going round to the front of the house itself, and so passing through it. Now from the moment I had first seen him in the woods, to that in which I beheld him standing within the tower, there had not been time enough for him to reach the front of the house, even had he been as well acquainted with the paths as myself, and had moved at the most rapid pace ; for the way was roundabout, and the distance considerable. He could not have leapt the garden wall, that was impossible. How then did he get in ?

I stood riveted to the spot, so wrapt in my own speculations and fancies on the subject, that I verily believe I should have stood there till called off by some new marvel, had not the broad and most unapparition-like face of my friend Mr. Colin Trewint at that moment presented itself before me, as he was descending from the upper terrace to the part of the garden where I lingered.

"What can you be looking after so earnestly ?" he said, as he descended the steps and drew near me.

"I know not," I replied, "unless it be the Evil One himself in the likeness of a man."

"The Evil One ! God forbid !" said Mr. Trewint. "But you are a clergyman, and must not jest on such matters. What is it ?"

"I do not jest," I answered ; "but a very strange thing has just now happened."

And then I told him all, not forgetting to mention that I had never lost sight of the garden door, of which I showed him the key in my hand. He was very much surprised, and, as the individual in question could be no longer seen, he would fain have persuaded me I must have mistaken one of the men-servants, or the boys who rode the post-horses and wore feathers in their caps, for the stranger. But all these conjectures were vain ; I felt I had not been mistaken, and that it was one and the same man I had first seen among the trees and so soon afterwards and in so mysterious a manner within the King's Tower.

It may well be supposed, independent of this matter, that my own recent reflections, and the conversation of the morning with Sir Thomas Joinacre, had altogether agitated and distressed my mind. I seemed to be involved in a train of mystery, from which I could neither extricate my thoughts nor my actions. I know not if my manner was so much affected by these things as

to strike Mr. Colin Trewint, but certainly his manner struck me. I thought he looked embarrassed, and that whilst I was busied in talking over with energy my late adventure, his mind was otherwise engaged than in attending to my narrative.

I scarcely know how it happened, but we got on insensibly from one subject to another, as we took a turn or two upon the terrace, till at length my employment in the family, more especially as tutor to Sabina, was the theme of our discourse. We had no sooner touched on this topic than my friend became very earnest, and at last told me that he thought my position was one of strong temptation and danger for me, as he feared I might be almost insensibly led to think of converting my tutorship into something of a much dearer connection with the young lady.

"What!" I exclaimed, losing all caution in the surprise of the moment, "have you then observed anything? For surely no man would think me so mad or so great a coxcomb as to fancy I could ever venture to look up to a young lady so much above me, without some marks of favour from her father."

"In a word, then, and to be candid with you," he said, interrupting me, "I have observed much. I have observed that you are singularly favoured by Sir Thomas Joinacre, but I wish to caution you not to build too much on his favour. Knowing how truly I was your friend, and that, as I may say, it was I who brought you into the family, Sir Thomas has more than once questioned me closely about you. And believe me, young gentleman, I did my best to say a good word for you. But for all that, and much as Sir Thomas has favoured you, yet, I would still say, be on your guard, build not too much on favour and appearance. I must not say more."

There was, I thought, something strange in the manner in which Mr. Trewint spoke the last words, in a tone bordering on solemn warning, as if he would have said much more, but was withheld from a sense of duty to his master—as he called Sir Thomas Joinacre.

Knowing how truly he had been my friend, though I longed for further explanation, yet I would not pain him by leading him, even indirectly, to be more explicit respecting the hints he had thrown out. I therefore turned the conversation on Charles Tregidiar, and on a point in which I felt much interest, as my regard both for Sabina and the youth was anxiously sincere.

"My worthy friend," I said, "you but now expressed a fear

that my affections might be exposed to no ordinary temptation by the intimacy which has naturally resulted from my acting as tutor to a young and beautiful pupil of the opposite sex. But have you never"—I paused ere I continued,—“have you never seen anything which might lead you to suspect that the youth to whose society her father so often quite unsuspiciously leaves her, may win some share in her heart? Who is the youth? I ask from a motive something better than mere idle curiosity. Who is he?”

“I do not know,” replied Mr. Trewint; “his appearance in this house was to me as sudden as that of the stranger was to you, whom but now you saw in the woods. All I can tell you is this. One morning, about two years ago, when I called on Sir Thomas Joinacre, he unexpectedly summoned into his presence a very handsome youth, about fifteen years old, but manly and grown beyond his age. Sir Thomas told me that he had been prevailed upon by a relative to take the boy, who was almost friendless, to become his secretary and to be useful to him in any way consistent with the breeding of a gentleman. I was much pleased with the simplicity of manner and the vivacity of the lad, during the short time he was in the room.” He paused, looked round, and, seeing no one near us, continued, “On his quitting it, Sir Thomas, who, you know, is never needlessly communicative, thought it good to tell me as follows:—‘That old Mrs. Lower, his kinswoman, and a lady of considerable fortune, had recommended the youth to his favourable notice, and had intimated that if he (Sir Thomas) refused to take him into his family, she should herself adopt him and so take care of him hereafter.’ Sir Thomas, who is a prudent man, did not altogether make it a secret that he thought it more prudent to take the boy himself than to suffer him to remain with the old lady to win on her affections, and so probably in the end cause her to be unjust to her near blood relatives. No man could blame Sir Thomas for this consideration, as blood relatives should always come first.”

“And so to please Mrs. Lower,” I said, “Sir Thomas took the boy as his secretary. What more?”

“Sir Thomas further told me,” continued Mr. Trewint, “that he was convinced there was some mystery about the youth’s birth; possibly not altogether creditable, and that, whatever it might be, old Mrs. Lower was in the secret, and kept it fast enough; for nothing more would she tell him—than that the

youth was of gentle blood ; and that, though he had no money and no friends who could serve him but herself, he was entitled to consideration and respect on account of his birth. Sometimes, when off her guard, from failure of memory and old age, she would call him *cousin* ; but how the *cousinship* (unless it were used as a term of endearment) could arise between the lad and the old lady Sir Thomas could not possibly conjecture ; and at all further inquiry about him she was apt to take offence, and would give no direct answer."

"It is very strange," I said. "Mrs. Lower is so plain, so upright a person. It is most mysterious."

"It is so truly," replied Mr. Trewint, "and sometimes Sir Thomas fancied—but it was only a fancy—that the boy might have been nearer akin than the old lady liked to confess. For there was a certain member of the family of Lower who had been very wild and immoral in his conduct whilst at Court ; for the Lowers were always a very great family in the west, and were much employed about the Court of the sovereign at home, and sometimes sent abroad in high diplomatic offices. Well, sir, one of these, a son of Doctor Lower, physician to his Majesty King Charles the Second, was thought not to have improved in his morals by becoming a favourite with that prince ; and so from his day even down to the present time a good deal of irregularity of conduct crept in among the *male* representatives of the otherwise honourable house of Lower. There was likewise another mysterious circumstance about Charles Tregidiar, which I have now to mention—it was indeed painfully mysterious."

Mr. Colin Trewint was about to proceed in this strange history, when, to my great vexation, he was suddenly summoned to attend Sir Thomas forthwith in the library, and was obliged to leave me with all the excited feelings of a raised and unsatisfied curiosity.

CHAPTER X.

“And though in peaceful garb array’d
And weaponless, except his blade,
His stately mien as well implied
A high-born heart, a martial pride.
Proud was his tone, but calm ; his eye
Had that compelling dignity,
His mien that bearing haught and high
Which common spirits fear.”

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

It was about this period that, one day, Sir Thomas Joinacre took the opportunity of informing his family circle that an old friend of his, who had lately arrived in England from foreign travel, would for some weeks become a guest in his house. His friend, he said, had lately suffered from severe sickness, which rendered repose desirable before he returned to his own home abroad. He was, he added, a man of talent and education ; and though, with the exception of a few years, he had resided all his life in America, he was by birth a Frenchman of a noble house, of great estimation at the Court of France. Sir Thomas further said that his friend spoke English so perfectly, both in accent and idiom, that he could scarcely be known for a foreigner. That in consequence of the jealousy of our government of all foreigners at the present period his friend wished to live in private, and to see no society beyond the family at Roseteague. He concluded with begging us all to treat him with kindness and attention, which we all very readily promised to do.

On the same day he introduced to our acquaintance a man of a tall, commanding figure, and, as I conjectured, about forty-five years old. He bore in his countenance the marks of recent sickness ; it was thin, pale, and careworn. The features, though sharpened by suffering, were well turned ; and the deep-set eyes, overshadowed by prominent brows, were as black as jet. The mouth was finely chiselled, more especially in the upper lip, where the line curved towards the cheek and where the muscle that by its instantaneous play gives such ex-

pression to the countenance was marked with the utmost delicacy.

The stranger was handsomely attired in a suit of purple ; the waistcoat and breeches of cut velvet ; a black silk turnover about the throat was secured by a neat gold solitaire ; and his wig was too fine to be of English buckle.

He bowed and said something courteous to each, as Sir Thomas Joinacre introduced us to him, one by one, with much formality. Me, Sir Thomas was pleased to designate as a gentleman of parts and learning, for whom he had a great esteem, and who acted as a minister of religion in his household. Dinner was soon after served, and we all took our seats.

It so chanced that mine placed me on the same side the board with our foreign guest, and the portly person of Mr. Colin Trewint was between us. I could not therefore see M. de Ploermel, for by that name was the foreigner introduced to us. I could, however, see his face most distinctly reflected in a looking-glass that hung on the opposite side of the room.

For some time there was little conversation. Sabina was silent from modesty, the boy Charles from youth, and I from shyness of disposition in the company of a stranger. Mr. Colin Trewint was too much awed by the presence of his patron to think of talking till he took the lead ; and old Sir Thomas said little, possibly from motives of caution, whilst the servants were in the room ; for according to the old-fashioned state of a Cornish household each person had a servant standing in attendance behind his chair. But had there been a doubt as to the birthplace of the stranger, the plain a silent meal seemed to give him would at once have settled it ; for in a very short time he managed to set us all talking. An Englishman makes his dinner an affair of business ; a work that must be steadily got through, and all matters are laid aside till it is accomplished. A Frenchman makes it a pastime, and plays with conversation, while he handles his fork more as a toy than as a weapon of attack upon his plate before him.

I listened to M. de Ploermel with mingled pleasure and surprise as his sentences in a full, rich-toned voice flowed on through all subjects with equal vivacity and ease. I cannot tell how he managed it, for though he talked more than all of us, yet he never seemed to interrupt any one in conversation ; and his politeness led him to make England, more than France and America, the theme of his discourse.

With Sabina he contrived to say something handsome about the Englishwomen, and remarked that if those of Cornwall differed from the ladies of other counties (to judge from what he had the happiness of seeing that day in one Cornish lady), it was but such a difference as the rose might claim above her sister flowers. The smile and the blush which this speech called up in the cheek of the fair Sabina caused her to look but the more lovely to confirm its truth.

I have more than once observed that a compliment paid by a Frenchman is generally given with so much warmth, as well as grace, that he never seems to flatter. His feelings alone appear to inspire his words, and sincerity constitutes the value of all praise ; compliment is its courtly dress ; and, as Shakespeare says, "It is the varnish of a complete man." A vulgar man may flatter, but it requires a gentleman to compliment.

We were all much pleased with the vivacity and the manners of our guest, and were not a little surprised at the extent of his information and the versatility of his discourse. He spoke of politics seemingly without reserve. Mr. Colin Trewint first touched on the subject by asking if there was anything new in the papers, as on that day Sir Thomas had received the *Flying Post*, a paper which reached Roseteague once every fortnight, and was nearly that time on the road, in its progress from house to house, from the metropolis to the West of England.

Sir Thomas replied, "Nothing, except a statement that the general discontent of London seemed to be extending to the country towns and boroughs, and was likely to have serious effects."

"The Jacobites, then," observed Mr. Trewint, "will be gratified by a change of administration. What, sir," he continued, looking at our guest, "what may be your opinion of these matters ? Foreign gentlemen, like yourself, who look on our affairs with less of party feeling, often see more clearly than we do ourselves what is passing among us. Do you not think, sir, the Pretender and the Jacobites will be much elated if there is a change ?"

"I should judge otherwise," replied the stranger, in the most unembarrassed manner ; "the present weakness of your administration is more likely to forward than to retard their views. But what, may I ask, does Mr. Ardenell think on the subject ? The clergy are generally calm and dispassionate observers."

Thus called upon, I was obliged to speak, and I ventured to give my opinion in these words: "When the king had for a minister the late Sir Robert Walpole, there was vigour in the State. All its measures were sound in judgment, prompt in execution, and unflinching in purpose. Even after Walpole resigned the helm of government to another hand, so much was he consulted by the king on all great occasions, that the same spirit of action was still kept alive. But Walpole is dead, and with him the genius of the British government seems to have departed; now so many are the politicians his Majesty has around him for counsellors, that this very circumstance occasions their disagreement among themselves, and I conceive it to be one main cause of our present distractions."

In such sort of chat passed the hour of dinner. Our guest contrived, by his vivacity and politeness, to put every one in good-humour with himself, the most certain way to become pleased with him who does so. Even the youth Charles came in for a share of complimentary notice; for, on something being said about his fondness for study and music, in the most glowing terms did M. de Ploermel set forth the benefits of learning to the young mind; and as for accomplishments, he declared that music was the most delightful of all, and ended his airy discourse by promising the young lady some songs from the last new opera in Paris. Sir Thomas and Mr. Colin Trewint discoursed about some vessels lately wrecked on the coast near us, and expressed their surprise that the government allowed a point of such danger to remain without a lighthouse. M. de Ploermel contrived to fall in with their discourse, and speedily became heated with the subject, raising his hands and speaking with all the energy and volubility of a Frenchman, and abusing our rulers for their neglect in the most unmeasured terms. I could not help suspecting that he must on some occasion have suffered great personal damage or loss on our Cornish coast.

At that moment he looked upward, and the sun, which had begun to play upon the windows, showed me his countenance more distinctly reflected in the glass opposite to where he sat. I started, for I fancied that I saw before me the same countenance which I had seen, though but for a minute, in the woods, under the shadow of the broad-brimmed hat with the red feather, and the person who, in so mysterious a manner, had contrived to gain entrance within the King's Tower; for, notwithstanding I had been laughed at by Sabina as whimsical and imaginary,

I was still unshaken in the belief of my own eyes on the occasion. And though M. de Ploermel wore no moustaches, there was something in the look, more especially about the eyes, of the man in the woods and the man in the glass, that struck me in the same manner, and created the same impression. Both, if they were separate persons, had an eye of fire ; but of that fire which kindles for passion, for rage, rather than to light the fancy of the mind. It was an eye such as no one would like to see in an enemy, with a pistol in his hand. As I now saw it glance with such angry expression, I recollected the boat I had seen on the same evening in which I met the stranger in the woods, with all the circumstances attending that encounter.

I know not by what promptings of curiosity, but I thought at the moment that I should like to see this singular man on the sea-shore, near that spot of danger, Parada Cove. There, possibly, something might arise to satisfy my doubts—was he or was he not the man I took him to be ? If he were playing a double part, what could be his real character, or what the nature of his visit to my patron ?

Acting on this suggestion, I availed myself of an opportunity in the course of conversation to propose a walk, as the afternoon was fine, in order to show our guest something of the neighbourhood. He gladly consented, and requested Sabina to add to the pleasure of the walk that of her company. The boy Charles was not forgotten ; but just as we were preparing to sally forth, Sir Thomas, to the lad's deep mortification, called him back, saying he had work for him in the library.

Soon after we left the house and made our way in the direction towards the heights of Pennare, but not by the usual path. We proceeded circuitously, and passed by a seldom trodden track in the woods, and thence to the village.

In our way one cottage in particular arrested the attention of the foreigner. It was within the domain of Roseteague, and lay half hidden and completely sheltered by the outspreading branches of some noble trees. A brook of the clearest water brawled along its pebbled bed in front of the little garden ; the thrush and the blackbird were in full song ; and, to complete the picture, some ruddy children just escaped from school, in the buoyancy of their freedom, were playing together, pushing each other down on the turf, near the rivulet's edge, rolling and tumbling about, and laughing with that glee which makes glad the heart of those older and wiser than themselves, as they hear

such notes of cheerfulness. The little rogues were shy, for they looked at us and then ran away, their bare feet bounding over the path, like young fawns startled at play, that for a moment stop, gaze at the intruder on their haunts, and then scud along to seek the recesses of their native forests, and are in an instant out of sight.

M. de Floermel, now restored to his accustomed complacency, looked for a few minutes on the scene, and said, "There is nothing in England which pleases me more than the sight of your cottages and your poor. How different are the poor with us! In France the feudal system still exists, when the benefit it once conferred on the peasantry is no longer experienced. The bread, the protection that the lord of the soil gave to his dependents, has ceased, but the toil and the vassalage with which it was earned remain, and, I fear, will at last bring on a day of heavy reckoning. But few of my countrymen consider this, and none lay it to heart. Happy is that country where a rural population is cherished by the higher classes, and where the poor man works for himself and his children, and not alone for the château and its lord."

We soon reached the heights of Pennare, ascending by a broken and precipitous path. The wind blew lightly; it seemed to fan the air without disturbing the ocean. The view from the headland was imposing. We looked on Garran's Bay and on the Manacles, that chain of fatal rocks with their black and splintered tops still formidable, though the waves rippled towards them in gentle salutation. Indeed, as Sabina said, "The ocean was as calm as an infant's rest." Clear as the most transparent crystal, reflecting the deep blue of a nearly cloudless sky, whilst a misty vapour towards the horizon seemed to mingle the heavens with the boundless waters. The fishing-boats that were out at sea, or returning towards the shore, their white sails catching the light breeze, made the waves seem instinct with life and animation; whilst a noble vessel, anchored about a mile from the land, lay in majestic repose. The constant and measured break of the waves, as the tide rolled in on the beach below, gave a character of awe to the surrounding scene, which is ever the result of a combination of the solemn sounds and the grand objects of nature.

We stood silent for a few minutes, looking around us. Sabina broke the silence, as she exclaimed, "What a charming sight is this! How awful these cliffs! how musical the chiming of the

waters, what a cadence they have ! What a dying fall, like a concert of the spirits of the deep among the rocks and caves ! ”

M. de Ploermel smiled at the poetic phraseology of the enthusiastic young lady. “ Yet,” she continued, “ there is a spot near us where few will venture ; where men say that strange sights are seen and sounds heard, and never without danger or death to any who would penetrate the mysteries of that unhallowed spot.”

Our guest expressed his surprise, and asked to what she alluded. “ To some Cornish superstition, no doubt,” I said ; “ there are many such in connection with this coast.”

“ You may call it what you please,” said Sabina, “ but it is not altogether a superstition. The story is this. Many years ago a smuggling vessel called the *White Hart*, whose crew were notorious for deeds of hardihood and cruelty, was wrecked on this wild, rocky coast of ours ; all the souls on board perished. But ever since that fearful wreck, at certain times towards nightfall, a spectre boat, manned by the wicked spirits of the lost crew, still wearing their peculiar dress of white and blue, is seen slowly and silently to make its way over the wild waves to Parada Cove, the scene of their worst deeds. Whilst they yet lived in the body, they were the terror of all who approached them by sea or land. Ever since Parada Cove has borne an evil name. None like to go near it, for there, it is averred, those wicked spirits are doomed to a never-ending task—to bind bundles of sand with ropes of sand within the caverns of the cove ; and if any fisherman chance to come within hearing of those doomed ones, the most terrible sounds meet his ear—the sounds of despair.”

Sabina rose, as she ended her story, and tripped towards the narrow path which, among broken crags and stones, led down to the beach. She was hanging on the arm of our foreign guest, when suddenly, as if he had started up from some unseen hollow in the side of the cliffs, a man stood before us in a seaman’s jacket, who, on seeing M. de Ploermel, gave an involuntary exclamation of surprise and recognition.

De Ploermel was unquestionably as much surprised as the man himself. He started, coloured highly, but, immediately recovering his self-possession, protested that he did not know him, and, as I fancied, gave him a peculiar and forbidding look, as if he dared the man to know him, at least to notice him. The seaman stood quite still, looked at him steadily, and said,

"I'm out in my guess, then ; ask you honour's pardon ; hope no offence."

"None, none whatever," replied the Frenchman in a hurried manner, and passed on. I eyed him closely, for my curiosity, coupled with a previous train of suspicion, was strongly excited. The man whom we met seemed, I thought, of higher grade than a common sailor ; he looked like the mate or the master of a coaster. This encounter had certainly upset the equanimity of our guest. I saw that he made an effort to rally his spirits and talk to Sabina, but every now and then he stopped abruptly and relapsed into reverie. Sabina's spirits also failed, and soon after she proposed that we should return to Roseteague.

On entering we met Charles Tregidiar in the hall, who eagerly inquired where we had been, for he had been out to look for us in vain.

"To Pennare," said Sabina, "to show M. de Ploermel the view."

"Oh ! then, you may have seen the smugglers. They have grown so daring that the people in the village say they landed a cargo this morning in broad daylight."

"Nonsense," said Sabina, "you talk like a silly boy ; they would never be so daring as that. How can you listen to such idle tales ?"

Sabina and the Frenchman passed on ; Charles detained me.

"Mr. Ardenell, tell me what has M. de Ploermel been saying to Sabina this evening ? She looks pale, and spoke to me unkindly. What has he been saying to her ?"

"I do not know," I replied, smiling at the youth's eagerness and evident mortification. "But, Charles, suppose M. de Ploermel was to ask her father's consent, marry her, and take Sabina away from us to France, what would you do then ?"

I said this playfully, but Charles did not take it so. He hung down his head, looked sad, and left me without speaking a word in reply.

CHAPTER XI.

"Oh ! think what anxious moments pass between
The birth of plots and their last fatal periods ;
Oh ! 'tis a dreadful interval of time."

ADDISON.

"Oh ! what authority and show of truth
Can cunning sin cover itself withal !"

SHAKESPEARE.

Soon after these events things began to wear a most mysterious aspect at Roseteague ; and in proportion as they did so, my mind became more and more uneasy and constantly on the watch to confirm or to clear up its suspicions. Sir Thomas Joinacre was more than ever busied in his closet, and was, as I learnt, perpetually writing letters without the aid of his secretary ; and, although he seemed to have so large a correspondence, he received little intelligence by the regular post.

The stranger was still our guest. He appeared to know no one in the neighbourhood, and sought no society beyond that of the circle in which he was located ; and I noticed that it was not to everybody who came to the house that he was introduced. I was the more struck by this caution, because about the time of which I am now speaking so many persons came, but slightly known, as I believed, to the household, and not always in the most open way to Roseteague. They would come late at night, and generally muffled up in large coats and cloaks. Most of them looked grave and thoughtful, and reminded me of Shakespeare's description of the conspirators in "Julius Cæsar." These owls, or night-birds, Sir Thomas invariably conducted to his own place of roosting—his secret chamber ; entering it by passing up the little corner stairs in the library, down which his coming in so strange and unexpected a manner had so startled me on my first meeting him.

With Sir Thomas there was now something so busy, so cautious and mysterious in all his words and ways, that I knew not what to think ; and to me he had become most strangely varying.

Sometimes distant and haughty, at others anxiously conciliatory ; yet there was not enough of heart in anything he said or did to call it kind. Sometimes I fancied that he had taken me into his family as a chaplain of the Protestant Established Church for the sake of keeping up appearances, and to save him from a suspicion of a leaning to Jacobitism and the Church of Rome. At others I thought his views about Sabina and myself were the sole cause of all his good or his angry feelings towards me, as we had still every possible facility afforded us to fall in love, had we been so disposed. But so perverse is the human will, that I am convinced, even had no other obstacle existed, that this too great facility—whatever might be the motive for it—would have defeated its own end. Love delights in freedom, in its unprompted views, in the surprise of its own feelings, and likes to steal unbidden to its choice. Love disdains all control but that of the heart ; and the young and the generous seldom fix where they are invited to do so by the united counsels of age and self-interest. I could not help thinking also that some great and secret uneasiness preyed upon the mind of Sir Thomas, and showed itself in the irregularity of his manner and the uncertainty of his purpose—a thing not usual with a man of his character, for he was in general decisive, even in ordinary matters, and very little apt to fluctuate when once he had determined upon any object of importance.

All these observations awakened in my mind the most alarming suspicions ; for although I had little intercourse with the world, and in one sense might be said almost to live out of it, and had never felt any strong party interest in the stormy politics of the period, yet I was not altogether ignorant of the spirit of the times. The unpopularity of the then existing government was notorious ; so likewise was the growing dissatisfaction of the west as well as of the north ; whilst the zeal and activity of the Jacobites, who were always on the watch for any opportunity of furthering their favourite cause, failed not to foment these discontents nor to fan the latent fire of disloyalty towards the house of Hanover. Far and near did they carry on their plots for bringing the Chevalier once more into this country, and this notwithstanding all his own and his father's previous defeats, and all the fearful executions of the law by which so much English as well as Scotch blood had been spilt, after unavailing attempts at rebellion.

It would be difficult for me to define the state of my mind,

as these circumstances and suspicions presented themselves before me with so much force. Had I regarded exclusively my own safety I should have thought of quitting Roseteague and seeking employment elsewhere. But no such thought was by me ever seriously entertained. I had no desire to leave a family in which, though now and then subjected to the caprice of an eccentric patron's temper, I was on the whole well treated, and in which my occupations were agreeable to me, and where I had formed one personal attachment, besides some friendships in the neighbourhood. Certainly I was not what is called in love with Sabina, yet my feelings for her were sincere ; they partook the nature of that calm affection which a brother cherishes towards a lovely and amiable sister, of whom he is at once proud and fond.

For her own sake I did not like to think of now leaving her, as I could not but fear the hour might come when she would need the services of a friend, and I might be useful to her. Had every other motive been wanting, gratitude alone would have forbidden me to think of flight, since the gentle kindness and single-minded friendship of Sabina had been undeviating towards me. Therefore, even had I not given a promise to Sir Thomas to remain with him, while these considerations were warm in my heart I should never seriously have thought of quitting Roseteague under the circumstances I have stated.

If it were only that sort of admiration which every Frenchman expresses for a pretty woman, or if it were a sentiment of a more serious kind, I could not discover, but certain it was that M. de Ploermel much admired Sabina. When talking to her or touching the guitar for her amusement—for among his many light accomplishments he could sing and play with taste and expression—he appeared to forget for awhile those anxious thoughts, of whatever nature they might be, which under ordinary circumstances unquestionably possessed him. Young as Charles was, I could hardly suppress a smile to see the evident uneasiness with which he watched these attentions of French gallantry. Probably what I had in jest observed about M. de Ploermel and the young lady might have seemed to him as something of serious import.

CHAPTER XII.

"Of what seems
A trifle, a mere nothing, by itself
In some nice situations turns the scale
Of Fate, and rules the most important actions."

THOMSON.

It was about this period that I was unexpectedly summoned to visit Launceston, by a hurried letter from my sister informing me that my dear mother was ill and wished much to see me. Sir Thomas could not refuse his permission to let me go to her, but entreated me, as it was understood her illness was not dangerous, to return as soon as I possibly could to Roseteague. I stayed till my mother was restored to her usual health, and was on the eve of bidding her adieu, when I chanced to take up the county newspaper, and among a few advertisements my eye glanced on one which arrested my attention. It was to this effect :—

"The sole surviving assignee of the property of the late Treville Crewse, Esquire, who died at Exeter many years since, having discharged all the debts of the said Treville Crewse, with all the interest thereon, herewith gives notice that he is ready to produce all necessary accounts and receipts of the aforesaid trust now fulfilled, and also is ready and willing to surrender up the estates to the heir-at-law of the said Treville Crewse, on the said heir-at-law producing all proper and necessary documents to prove he is such and is so entitled. For further information application to be made to James Trewheedle, Esquire, Attorney-at-law, in the Borough of Launceston, Cornwall."

I read this advertisement to my mother, and on concluding it said,—

"Who is the sole surviving assignee of the property of that unhappy man," looking at the pale-faced portrait of my grandfather, which now hung in the parlour of the old house.

"He must be, I suppose," she replied, "Sir Thomas Join-

acre ; for all the other assignees have, I believe, long since been dead."

"And who is the heir-at-law?"

"You are ; you must be the heir-at-law," she answered with great vivacity, as her ashy cheek changed to crimson. She continued, "God, my son, has opened to you the way ; now assert your claims and take your right."

"Oh ! now indeed," I said, as a multitude of thoughts and recollections presented themselves to my mind,—“now can I most fully comprehend the purport of certain hints thrown out to me by Mr. Colin Trewint. And now can I understand a still greater mystery—once dark indeed—but now all is light ; there can be no more doubt.”

"What do you mean, Frank?" said my mother. "How am I to understand your words?"

"No matter," I replied. "But this I may tell you, that I could detect—for I watched him closely—a great struggle for some time going on in the bosom of Sir Thomas Joinacre. His conduct to me was most various, most unaccountable ; but now it is clear. His avarice and his conscience were at war. Conscience has at last got the victory, and he advertises for the heir of Treville Crewse."

"It is God, my son," said my mother ; "God alone has thus alarmed his conscience ; his heart is softened. And, oh ! may he repent ! though at the eleventh hour, may he do that justice to the heir of Treville Crewse which he denied to the unhappy man himself ! The law, I trust, will give you your right ; for I cannot wish you should obtain it by a union with the daughter of Sir Thomas, be she never so fair, for his blood flows in her veins. Touch not pitch, my dear Frank, would you remain undefiled."

I could not help smiling at my poor mother's alarm, and assured her there was no cause for it. At the same time I endeavoured to do justice to the merits of Sabina.

"My mother," I said, "two things would make me rejoice in the acquisition of fortune. The first, that by possessing it I could enlarge your comforts ; and the second, that with independence I might seek to wed Maria."

"For myself, Frank," she replied, "I have enough to content me. My life hitherto has been one of humble means, and for fortune now to find me out would hardly do me good, since I am too old to make an active use of the goods of this world for

the benefit of others, and should therefore tremble at the responsibility annexed to fortune—the talent hid in the napkin had a fearful recompense.”

“Always conscientious, my dear mother,” I said; “always afraid that you are neglecting those duties which few perform so well.”

“But for you, Frank,” she continued, “I should rejoice to see you united to Maria. Yet in one thing let me advise you, not too hastily to seek to renew your acquaintance with her. Wait and see what may be your success. But do not raise the hopes of a girl so poor, to make her dissatisfied with her present condition, till you are certain you can release her from it, and give her a better. Wait, at least, till all doubt is at an end.”

“All doubt is at an end! Why, surely, my dear mother, no doubt can exist if what you have told me is true?”

“All I have told you is true,” she replied. “But remember in law all must be *proved* true, with such proofs as no court can deny; and if these fail—”

“How can they fail?” I said. “Nothing seems to me more easy; and even if they did fail, you, the daughter of Treville Crewse, can step forward and convince Sir Thomas Joinacre that I am the only creature living who can claim as heir-at-law to that unhappy man. Your claim, as his sole surviving daughter, would be nearer than mine, had you not told me that the estates in question are entailed on the heir male.”

“You little know Sir Thomas Joinacre,” said my mother; “he convinced! Trust me, he is already convinced, and would therefore be glad to find a way to retain the estates legally himself. This plan would satisfy his conscience. But if you think, because he thus advertises, that he will readily resign his power, I tell you, once again, you do not know the man.”

“Of what avail then this advertisement?”

“Of much,—of everything,” replied my mother. “That advertisement is the unction he lays to the smarting wounds of a goading conscience, and mark how his avarice will take it. *Conscience* will be satisfied with his having made the effort to discover the true heir-at-law. *Avarice* will admit none to be such till every technical point of legal proof be complete, so that no court in England could refuse a verdict.”

“He is, then,” I said,—“he is the man I have long suspected him to be. Why should he take a chaplain? Such a man’s religion can hardly be sincere.”

"It may," said my mother, "after his own fashion. But some men say that he is a deep dissembler in respect to his principles."

"If so," I said, "then is another suspicion of mine not altogether ill-founded, and strange discoveries seem to be at hand. But what must I do? Counsel me how to proceed. I would willingly do all in peace. Were every other motive wanting, my regard for Sabina would make me feel desirous to establish my claim in as amicable a manner as possible; to avoid whatever is hostile also becomes my profession."

"Follow the instructions of this advertisement. Put on your hat; go and call at once on Trewheedle. Certainly, he is not the most respectable man in his profession, but he is much employed by those persons, even among the high-born, who respect their purses more than the means by which they are filled."

"Yes," I said; "I will at once see him."

"Do not let him suspect how little you really know of the matter, and of one thing I must especially warn you."

"Tell me every point," I said, "on which I must be wary, and trust to my discretion for the rest."

"Well, then," she continued, "I was but a child when my poor father died; but I have always heard that, after his death, some difficulty existed about establishing the marriage of my parents; for Treville Crewse ran away with my mother, who died before him, and nobody knew at what church the marriage ceremony was performed; so that a certificate of the marriage was never obtained. Do not let Trewheedle into that secret."

"Does Sir Thomas," I said, "suspect this to be the fact? What think you?"

"I do not know," she replied, "but be on your guard with the attorney."

"I will lack no caution. And now, my dear mother, give me your blessing, and I will depart, and see what can be done in the affair. I care not for the land for its own worth, but I think of you, of my sister, and of Maria when wealth seems offered to my acceptance as a right."

As I said this my mother kissed me, smoothed down my hair, as she did when I was a boy, brought me my hat and cane, and, opening the door for me herself, took off her shoe and threw it after me for luck.

Mr. James Trewheedle, attorney-at-law, by a natural shrewd-

ness of observation knew very well the common order of mankind, and as these are pretty much the same in the mass, acted upon by the same passions and motives in having recourse to law, he knew well how to turn their dispositions to account in ninety and nine cases that came under his charge. He could never conduct a cause by an open straightforward process, and rarely won it by a fair one. Hence all the petty, minor offences which the low in vice, or in station, were tempted to commit, found their advocate in him, and now and then some of a higher order also sought his aid. By such means, and speculating in some of the great tin-mines that were discovered in Cornwall about his time, Mr. Trewheedle had managed to get tolerably rich.

On announcing my name I was ushered into an apartment something between an office and a sitting-room, the most conspicuous decoration of which was a fresh-painted portrait of the attorney himself, evidently the work of some native artist. Whilst I was contemplating the portrait, the original stood grinning and bowing before me. Although he was most voluble in civil speeches, which had in them very little meaning, not a word would he utter to help me forward in my business, after he knew who I was, till I pretty well let him see by my floundering how little I really knew myself concerning the matter I came about.

His portrait, though like, did not depict the man so well as I could paint him; I will, therefore, try my hand at a sketch. Lawyer Trewheedle, though a dapper little fellow, had a very mean air, a small head, surmounted by a bob-wig, a low narrow forehead, eyes as black as coals, the corners of the lids running upwards, and so contracting when he spoke that the eyes could only be seen to twinkle in little sparks, as he smiled and looked exquisitely knavish. In his manner all was soft and insinuating, there was nothing bluff about him; but the voice in which he made his fluent speeches was sharp, cracked, and disagreeable.

After a few civil good-morrows, I felt myself obliged to begin, and broke the ice at once by telling him I had that day seen a newspaper (pulling it out of my pocket) containing an advertisement respecting the heir-at-law of the late Treville Crewse. "Sir," I added, "I am that heir."

"Most happy to see you, sir, on the business," replied the attorney. "Pray, sir, in what way, may I ask, are you in this fortunate position?"

"Treville Crewse, sir, no doubt you are aware," I said, "had two daughters—Constance Crewse, who was adopted by a relative of condition, and died in childhood; and my mother, the younger and still surviving sister. Treville Crewse, sir, never had but one wife."

"Always supposing," said the attorney,—“excuse me, sir, I speak as a lawyer—always supposing that his wife was his wife.”

I smiled as I replied, "Of course, and I, who am the son of the still surviving daughter, stand as heir-at-law to the late Treville Crewse, seeing that the estates are entailed on the heir male."

"Born in lawful wedlock," said the attorney.

- "Of course," I answered, colouring, for I felt my cheeks glow. "You do not suppose that my mother was illegitimate?"

- "By no means, sir; I suppose nothing. I take all to be as you tell me—strictly correct, unimpeachable as the title of his Majesty and the Hanoverian succession, and, like that, by right of settlement; that is, I mean, by legal documents to support the same."

"I do not know what you mean, sir," I said. "But you, who have lived for so many years in Launceston, must have known me from childhood. You must know that my father's wife—my mother—was the daughter of the late Treville Crewse."

"Sir, excuse me," said Mr. Trewheedle, "I speak as a lawyer, and as acting in this business for Sir Thomas Joinacre; I must recognize no one. No, sir, not my own father's son, did he come before me as the heir of Treville Crewse, without his claim being supported by documents. These I shall be most happy to examine. No doubt you have them in your pocket."

"Not exactly, sir," I replied, "having only this morning read the advertisement in the newspapers. But if you will say what documents are required, I will endeavour to procure them."

"Certainly, most certainly—certificates of the registers of baptism, marriage, burial, of your grandfather, Treville Crewse; and of his father, mother, grandfather, and grandmother; also of his brothers and sisters, if he had any, to prove the latter were younger and not older, and died before himself. And not only the certificates of Treville Crewse's marriage, but of the burial of his wife also; likewise of your mother's birth and marriage; and, lastly, of your own birth. All these will be very easy to procure, and quite satisfactory. And when all this is

done, we must have a few more papers, such as copies of your grandfather's and your great-grandfather's will, your great-grandmother's marriage articles, and all deeds of settlement; then will come deeds of entail—if entailed by deed; and, finally, any other papers or parchments that may be required. You see how very clear, and in some respects concise, all these documents will make our business—that is, when they are got together; and then I do hope—unless any difficulties should start up and we find an appeal to Chancery necessary, and have to file a bill—I do hope all may be amicably settled in the course of a very few years. But these things are not to be done in a day. Right is right, and law is law, and time is time.”

“And seemingly, Mr. Trewheedle, Sir Thomas Joinacre and myself may drop into eternity and leave the estates of Treville Crewse as an heirloom of cost and strife for those who come after, if so many documents are absolutely necessary to prove that I am my own mother's son, and that she is her own father's daughter. You surely do not mean seriously that the law demands all you have stated, to give me a right which no man could dispute without falsehood or fiction.”

“The law, sir, has many fictions,” replied Mr. Trewheedle. “A fiction in law is admitted in many cases; for instance, you see, supposing A and B be claimants for—”

“Excuse me, sir,” I said, interrupting his illustrative position, “I merely want to be certified if all the documents you have specified are absolutely necessary, and by what means I am to obtain them. Does the law require so much?”

“Not a paper less, I do assure you; and as for obtaining them—excuse me—your own attorney will, doubtless, do all that may be required therein. I can in nowise, consistently with my duty, interfere. I shall be very happy to receive copies of documents from your solicitor, but I must wash my hands of collecting them.”

I could not conceal my vexation, for I knew too well the most important document of all might never be traced—the certificate of the marriage of Treville Crewse. But I did not let that escape me.

Mr. Trewheedle next turned his discourse on the family of Sir Thomas Joinacre, and inquired how I liked Roseteague, how long I had been absent, &c. I answered briefly, and was preparing to take leave, but he still contrived to keep up the discourse, as if he had something to say which he did not know

very well how to bring out. At length he ventured to ask in direct terms if I had heard that the government were much alarmed by strong indications of some new movement of the Jacobites, not only in Scotland, but in England ; that the north was all but in open rebellion again, and the west was believed to be tainted with the same ill-feeling towards the house of Hanover. He then asked, looking at me askance, and putting his question suddenly, but not directly, as if to surprise me into an answer, "How I thought the neighbourhood of Falmouth stood affected—how our friends at Roseteague?"

I was surprised, well knowing that in former days Trewheedle was looked upon as a bitter Jacobite. I replied, therefore, "That if he retained his former opinions he could in all probability form a more correct judgment of the temper of men's minds in the west than myself."

"I a Jacobite!" he exclaimed, with a look of surprise very well put on, if it were really assumed. "I! You surely do not know that the government have done me the favour and the honour of placing confidence in me, and have given me an office of some trust and emolument in this town? I a Jacobite! You were never more mistaken in all your life. I am no friend to Popery and arbitrary power, or to a fraudulent Pretender. We want no warming-pan, sir, in the throne of England."

"Certainly not, sir," I said; "such would be rather too warm a cushion for the seat of royalty, be it a George or a Charles who occupied it. But you surely do not believe that silly story about the child brought in a warming-pan to the Queen of James the Second? Surely, Mr. Trewheedle, that may be held like one of your own fictions in law—useful, but scarcely credible."

"I cannot exactly say, sir, what I do believe or what I do not believe," replied the little attorney. "In short, sir, I think it safest and best to believe nothing but what is by law established on undeniable proof. I beg pardon, sir, but I must tell you that you have been living in a family strongly suspected of leaning to the Pretender, and I did think it impossible you could have lived under the same roof with the members of that family; and not have seen something of what was or might be going on."

"Well, sir," I said, "please to say on. You are, I believe, Sir Thomas Joinacre's man of business."

"Not exactly so," said Mr. Trewheedle. "I am his attorney-at-law, very willing to do anything for him in the way of

business—such as drawing a lease, a case, conducting a suit, or what not ; but with his Jacobite principles—if he really entertains them—I beg, sir, you will understand I have nothing to do.”

He raised his head as he spoke, and tried to look important in his renunciation of the Pretender and all his works. I had a mind to see where all this would end, and what he was angling to fish out of me. So, instead of cutting him short, I remained silent.

Probably misconstruing my silence, he got bolder in his discourse. “It is possible, sir,” he said, “that you may not be aware the government has received information that it is shrewdly suspected the young Pretender, Charles Edward, now absent from St. Germain, is at this very moment concealed somewhere in these western counties, awaiting the hour for a simultaneous movement, in the north and in the west, to strike a great blow for the crown.”

Then, looking cautiously around him, he came close up to me, took hold of my button, and sinking his cracked voice to a half-whisper, added, as he nodded his head and winked till he nearly shut his little black bugle eyes, “There is fifty thousand pounds set on the Pretender’s head!—fifty thousand pounds!”

“And what is that to me?” I said.

“You will go back to Roseteague, will you not?”

“Certainly. I am not without a hope that Sir Thomas Joinacre will accede to an amicable settlement of my claims. I am also bound by a promise not to leave him suddenly. But why do you ask if I am about to return to Roseteague?”

“Oh, sir,” he replied, “the fact is beyond all doubt—that old mansion hath many mysteries. In days of yore it concealed more than one man who had occasion to hide himself from observation. King Charles there rested safely a day and a night when half the country was up in arms to take him. Sir, there are secrets at Roseteague of which but one man dwelling there knows the clue, and he is not very likely to make it public; but a quick eye, a close watch. Now do you understand me?”

“I do indeed, Mr. Trewheedle,” I replied, endeavouring to repress my indignation at this artful bait thrown out to fish out of me some information that he might, no doubt, turn to his own advantage. “My answer may be given in a few words. I am a friend neither to Jacobites nor rebels; nor have I much cause to thank Sir Thomas Joinacre for keeping me out of an estate

to which he must know that I stand heir-at-law. But were the Pretender my greatest personal enemy, and if the estates I claim had as many kingdoms as they have acres, and I might win them all by such means as you have hinted, I would rather starve, die in a gaol, than play the base, the treacherous part you have pointed out to me. What your real motive may be I cannot fathom, but God keep me from the snares of villainy."

I gave a look of scorn at the miserable, artful rogue, snatched up my hat, and instantly left the house, my blood boiling and my cheeks glowing with indignant feeling.

CHAPTER XIII.

"His talk was now of tithes and dues
 He smoked his pipe and read the news ;
 Knew how to preach old sermons next,
 Vamp'd in the preface and the text ;
 At christenings well could act his part,
 And had the service all by heart ;
 Wish'd women might have children fast,
 And thought whose sow had farrow'd last.
 Against Dissenters would repine,
 And stood up firm for right divine ;
 Found his head fill'd with many a system,
 But classic authors he ne'er miss'd 'em."

SWIFT'S *Baucis and Philemon*.

BEFORE I quitted Launceston I put my business in the hands of an attorney to whom I was strongly recommended, the rival of Sir Thomas Joinacre's man-at-law, who, though perhaps less active and having a less lucrative practice, was nevertheless a sound-judging, straightforward and most honest lawyer. My mother told him all she knew as to where her father and mother were born and buried ; but where they were married she could not tell. Theirs had been a runaway match, and she did not think there was any one then alive who could give the least clue by which to trace out the fact.

Our attorney assured me that without the required certificate nothing could be done. He recommended decided measures : to offer at once a very large reward—one hundred pounds—to whomsoever would supply a copy of the certificate of the marriage of the late Treville Crewse, bachelor, with Mary Beaumont, spinster—the advertisement to state that the marriage was solemnized in the west of England, but in what parish unknown.

The prospect of so large a reward set all the parsons in Cornwall and Devonshire hunting their old registers, and every page which time, Cromwell's men, and the rats had spared, was examined as strictly as if the holding or losing of their own

several benefices depended on the success or the failure of the search. At length information was received that in the parish of —, a few miles from Exeter, the missing register had been discovered by the Reverend Jeremiah Turnabout, incumbent. As the first report of this came to me by a third person, I lost no time in writing to Mr. Turnabout to ascertain if I had been correctly informed, and forthwith received from him a very satisfactory answer, saying that if I would call myself, or send a proper person to receive the document, I should have a copy of the entry in his register.

Determined to be assured that all was right before I paid the hundred pounds (which sum, by the way, my attorney was obliged to raise for me on bond at a high interest, with certain other sums to carry on the law proceedings), I thought it would be best for me to ride over to — and see Mr. Turnabout myself, as directed.

On presenting myself at the parsonage, I found he was not at home, but was ushered into his sitting-room, where his wife and daughters received me with much civility, and assured me that the register of my grandfather's marriage was safe and sound, and that if I called the next morning Mr. Turnabout would himself be happy to give me the required certificate.

On hearing this I returned to my inn, quite easy in mind, and thankful for the prospect opening before me. I can with truth say that my feelings were not ungenerously disposed, even to Sir Thomas Joinacre, as I made up my mind that I would call upon him for the payment of no arrears should it appear that arrears were due to me from the rents of the estates; that I would beg him to retain them, and to let them go towards the portion of his charming daughter, Sabina; at the same time imploring him to consider the happiness and the hopes of his child as the first object in her settlement with a partner who should be the choice of her affections.

When my head was laid down on the pillow, I went on castle-building. With the proceeds of my expected estates I settled everything most entirely to my own satisfaction. For my mother I built a pretty cottage near my own mansion, wherever that might be. I bought for her, with handsome saddle and housings, a good stout horse that should carry double, to take her comfortably to church on a pillion, with her old manservant, Thomas, as the fore-rider. My sister I portioned off, and married her to a young apothecary in Launceston,

for whom I had detected she had a fancy. And for myself! Need I say that in this visionary arrangement of my affairs I travelled to London, found out Maria, and married her to my heart's content, surprising her by the very handsome settlements I made upon her. All this I did with the utmost satisfaction, and dropped asleep whilst I was debating the point, which would be the most proper, to marry Maria in London and bring her down to the country as my wife; or to bring her down at once, place her under my mother's care, and then marry her at Launceston.

On waking the next morning, I rose with the lark, and was impatient till the hour arrived to sally forth and obtain from Mr. Turnabout the all-important marriage register—the first necessary step towards the realization of those pleasant dreams which I had enjoyed overnight. "But boast not thyself of the morrow," says the philosopher of Scripture, "for thou knowest not what a day shall bring forth."

Being in no doubt about my business, I rode leisurely along, not wishing to blow my horse, as he would on that day have to carry me a good way forward on my return journey. I had to wind down a long hill before I reached the place of my destination, and whilst doing so I noticed the sweet pretty parsonage before me. I liked it so well that I determined to build my proposed cottage for my mother smaller, but in the same style. The dwelling was a very old stone building, thatched, standing in a garden, with an orchard nigh to it, and a wood of some extent on the slope of a hill, at the back of the house.

The village and its ancient Gothic church were not more than a couple of hundred yards from the residence of the pastor. All this was very pleasing, and my imagination immediately turned portrait painter; so that before I got to the bottom of the road I completed a picture of that pastor—a venerable white-haired old man, with an eye and mind raised from earth to heaven, and so careless of this world's goods that, on our meeting, so reluctant was he to take the promised reward that I had to press it upon his acceptance, and at last only prevailed with him to receive it on account of his daughters—the two fine girls I had seen the night before. What sort of skill my fancy possessed in portraiture is now to be stated.

As I entered the doorway Mr. Turnabout came forward to receive me with great civility. I cannot say that I recognized in him a likeness to my picture. I was not in any way

prepossessed in his favour, though the errand I came upon was one of profit to myself.

Parson Turnabout was a large heavy-made man, with a big head, a broad face, with red and swollen features ; his eyes grey, sharp in their expression, and half-buried in the fat of his cheeks. He carried his huge person with a sort of swaggering air, and with a thick utterance spoke fast and authoritatively, ending most of his sentences with "That's what I say," as if no one dare say a word in contradiction to what was thus by him confirmed ; and as he used a great deal of action, often shaking his hand by way of emphasis, he frequently looked as if he would knock you down did you venture to oppose him.

This clerical Hercules was altogether coarse, in person, voice, manner, and feeling ; for the very first questions he asked me were, how I intended to pay him the hundred pounds?—whether in gold or bills ; and if the latter, on what firm ? I replied that when I had the certificate, we would soon settle that matter. He said it was very well, and bade me follow him, and he would at once give it to me.

He then opened a small door which admitted us to what he called his study. Friar Bacon's, I should think, could not have contained matters of greater antiquity ; for everything seemed old and smelt musty. There were a few antiquated books with worm-eaten backs, apparently never opened, for the spiders had given them an embroidered covering of their own. The chairs around were tumble-down and also worm-eaten. Bridles, saddles, martingales and bits, with fowling-pieces and fishing-tackle, mud-boots and galligaskins, an old gown and cassock, his reverence's Sunday wig, an old hamper with the straw scattered about, and the bottles, some in it, some out, with a thousand other miscellaneous articles, constituted the very curious contents of Mr. Turnabout's study. All seemed hanging, tumbling, and lying around in the greatest confusion. An old table, one of the legs broken and propped up with a joint stool, stood in the middle of the apartment ; and on this were pens, ink, paper, and the parish register.

"Here he is," said Mr. Turnabout (adopting the provincial phrase, by which even the cows are called *he* in the west of England), and sitting down before the table on one old chair, and motioning to me with his hand to take my seat by his side on another, he forthwith opened the book, and with his dirty finger and thumb began turning over the pages of the register.

"We'll have him in a jiffey," continued Mr. Turnabout. "Body of me, where can he be?"

Not immediately finding the place, he had recourse to his spectacles. But even these artificial eyes, assisting his natural ones, produced no better result.

"Sir," I said, "will you allow me to help you in your search? We know the date of the year of my grandfather's marriage, although, till I heard from you, we did not know the church in which it was solemnized. Will you allow me to search the register?"

"By all means," he replied; "it will save me trouble, and I'm in a hurry. My neighbour, Squire Badger's hounds are out to-day. I stayed away from the hunt on purpose to see you; but I want to ride up and learn if the sports are over, and who's got the brush; and I mean to dine with 'em, as asked so to do!"

"I will not detain you, sir," I said, "more than a few minutes. I trust this morning to complete my business with you."

"Will you settle now, then, about the money?" inquired Mr. Turnabout, "or how? I like clear scores; and that's what I say."

"Allow me, sir, first to find the register," and with that I carefully examined the book. I confess I felt a shock I could not describe, as I said, "No wonder, sir, you could not find the entry of my grandfather's marriage; for see! the page of the year in which it took place has been cut out; and I see by the very appearance of the parchment this shameful act of mutilation has been recent."

"Body of me! and so it has," said Mr. Turnabout. "Then I lose one hundred pounds; a very hard case for a man with a family, and a poor living like this; and that's what I say and think."

"And I, sir, lose an estate to which I am heir-at-law, unless the villain who committed this act can be detected, and the page recovered, if it be not already destroyed. May I ask where you usually keep your register books, and if you have lately admitted any one into this room without yourself being present? Where do you keep the registers?"

"Keep the register books! Why, here to be sure," replied Mr. Turnabout, "and sometimes when not much wanted, in a box in the corner there, where I put my stock of sermons, my

wife's tea, and my own store of tobacco and pipes, and some other choice things that we want to keep dry, free from the damp of this old house, when we take in a store for winter use. But the books for the last month have been where you now see them, lying on this table ; and the key of the study I always keep in my own pocket."

"But some one must have been here," I said ; "the act of cutting must be recent ; it is not ten days since I wrote to you and received your answer that the document was safe in your own register books, and that I should be satisfied if I came to your house or sent for it. Pray consider, sir, can you remember no one having been with you since that period ? The thing is of the utmost consequence to me."

"Why, man, I tell you, and so it is to me," he replied ; "it's worth a hundred pounds to me, and that's of consequence enough, I think. I wish I had the rascal here who did it—to serve me so ! It's enough to make a parson swear ; and that's what I say—a most rascally act."

"It is so, sir," I replied. "But pray think the matter well over. Some one must have had access to this room, and to these books."

"So they must," said Mr. Turnabout ; and scratching his thick head, at length with many prefatory hums and hahs and pauses and repetitions, he produced from the stores of his memory the following statement :—That about a week before my arrival two young men, in the dusk of the evening, came and asked to speak with him ; that he went to these men at the house door ; but seeing one of them was in liquor, he would not speak to them on their business that night, but directed them to come again on the next morning about ten o'clock. They did so. One he described as a young, pale, thin man ; the other, young also, had much the look and wore the blue jacket of a sailor. They asked for a marriage certificate of old date, but not for that of my grandfather. Mr. Turnabout took them into his study to give it to them. Whilst there he was suddenly called off by some stranger on the pretext of most pressing business. He left the study, he protested, but for five minutes. On his return he gave the men a copy of the certificate they had required, and immediately after both departed.

"With the page they had cut out, I presume, in their pockets," I said.

"Ay, and with my hundred pounds, too, into the bargain,"

said Mr. Turnabout, "as good as if they had taken it, as far as the loss concerns me. What's to be done? Here's a pretty kettle of fish, if this gets to the ears of the bishop."

"I will consult my attorney, sir," I replied, "and you shall hear from him or from myself on the subject."

"And the hundred pounds!" said Mr. Turnabout.

"I would gladly give it," I answered, "to recover the missing register."

"Well, that's handsomely said," responded Mr. Turnabout, "and now don't be down-hearted, and as you are a brother parson, why step in, young gentleman, to my wife's parlour, and take a cup of cider, or of ale, or of any liquor that likes you better: and we'll drink to the recovery of your grandfather's missing register. Brothers of the cloth should be social and neighbourly, and meet and part friendly."

"Certainly, sir," I said, "but excuse me; no time is to be lost in this matter. I must immediately return to Launceston to consult my attorney as to what can be done; he is both an able and an honest lawyer."

Mr. Turnabout congratulated me on being in such good hands. He still contrived to detain me. Again he hummed and hawed, scratched his head, and looked grave, as, lowering his voice, he said in a sort of undertone, that if I would be advised by him and would go and consult his wife, and not let him know anything about the matter, he thought she could very probably put me in a way to recover, or at least to get some clue to the truth about, the missing register.

I need not say this effectually arrested my attention, although I was incapable of comprehending the mystery which accompanied such advice. I accepted therefore the offer to go into his wife's parlour and partake of some refreshment. Mr. Turnabout conducted me thither, and after producing a jug of very capital ale, and, by way of setting me the example, drinking a good quart of it himself, he soon after left the room, and his wife, with much zeal and with due gravity, thus opened her communication. There was, she said, an old woman in the village, who was a most wonderful person in her way. Her husband, worthy Mr. Turnabout, being the parson of the parish, dared not countenance her himself. But I was a stranger; nobody knew me; and if I went to her she would wager a guinea that Molly would tell me who was the man that cut the page from the register; for old Molly told her, true as the day,

who it was that stole her silver caudle-spoon at Candlemas last.

"And what is old Molly?" I inquired.

"What is old Molly Ferret!" she said, and then whispered in my ear, "Molly is a white witch, and as clever a one as ever baffled the wiles of the evil spirit—with honester charms than his own."

I was surprised to find the wife of a clergyman, homely though indeed she was, so completely the dupe of one of the most popular superstitions of the west. I thanked Mrs. Turnabout, but declined following her advice, then remounted, and the next day ended my journey at Launceston.

My attorney recommended me to obtain Mr. Turnabout's statement by affidavit: his having seen the register, and the subsequent loss of the page, with all particulars. Great was my amazement when Mr. Turnabout, in contradiction to all his previous assertions, now said that he believed he must have been in error. He certainly thought that he had seen the entry of the marriage, but names were often so much alike, he might have mistaken some others for those I wanted, and the page being since lost in so mysterious a manner he really could not consent to take upon him to swear he had seen them. He did not like to risk getting into trouble about the matter.

So ended for a time all my hopes and day-dreams of being established in my right as the heir of Treville Crewse.

CHAPTER XIV.

"Trust reposed in noble natures
Obliges them the more."

DRYDEN.

ON my return to Roseteague, as I was received with more than usual cordiality by Sir Thomas Joinacre, I told him everything already known to the reader, and how my hopes stood of making good my claim as the heir of Treville Crewse. He heard me without interruption, till I came to Mr. Turnabout's second statement, that possibly he had mistaken some very similar names for those of my grandfather and grandmother in his register.

"I cannot hastily disbelieve it; truly, it might have been so," said Sir Thomas; "for are you aware that a great doubt existed if Treville Crewse was ever lawfully married to the beautiful young lady whom he persuaded to elope from her guardian?"

"No, Sir Thomas, I never heard it; I am convinced it is a falsehood."

"Treville Crewse," he continued, "I verily believe was never married. Men are neither always wise, moral, or religious; in early life wild and thoughtless associates gain an ascendancy over a weak mind, and first corrupt the manners and then the principles of a better man than themselves, till he becomes the victim of their evil companionship. Such, I fear, was the case with Treville Crewse."

"Excuse me, Sir Thomas," I said, "but your plain speech is an apology for mine. I have heard that in early life you were one of the most intimate friends of my unhappy grandfather, and in a way not so entirely to your own credit as you could have wished in after-life."

He saw that he had gone a step too far in his assumed superiority. To gain credit, therefore, for what he had to say in furtherance of his own opinion, he conceded something by admitting the truth of his own youthful errors.

"Ay," he said, "you justly remind me of those follies into which I was led when I consorted with my poor friend, Treville Crewse, chiefly in the hope to lead him by better counsel from

his dangerous associates. But who shall touch pitch, and not be defiled? I confess it; with shame and sorrow I confess I was too confident in my own strength, and when I approached the slough of vice, as John Bunyan says in his 'Pilgrim's Progress,' to draw another out, I was myself drawn in."

I neither did nor could dispute this point with Sir Thomas. The question, however, was not this, but the marriage of Treville Crewse. I insisted upon it, and defended the unhappy man; for although idle, extravagant, and addicted to gaming, I never heard that he was a bad husband or a heartless seducer. So fond was he of his wife that, as it appeared from the private journal which I had seen, her death turned his brain. Sir Thomas here pointed out that there was no possibility of establishing the marriage without the register.

"I am so convinced of this," I replied, "that unless the missing page can be recovered, or, in default of the same, you will admit as testimony my mother's statement and convictions, my claim must fall to the ground."

"And to support such convictions we have the facts of Treville Crewse being a known law-breaker, lingering out his days in a gaol, and dying an insane beggar in consequence of his career of folly and vice. A counsel would have some comments to make upon such facts as these, Mr. Ardenell."

I was silenced, but not convinced, for there are some things which need not the cold process of legal proof to show their truth, the best proof being in the breast of the candid and the honest. But it suited the purpose of Sir Thomas to be sceptical. He once more resumed the topic in these words:—

"No, sir, though I am incredulous in this matter, yet, Mr. Ardenell, I think well of you, and wish you well."

Again he paused and gave me a look as if he would penetrate my inmost thoughts, before he added,—

"Till the heir-at-law can *prove* himself to be such, the estates must rest in my hands, and at my death I must resign them to the keeping of my immediate heir. Now, sir, that heir is my only child, my daughter, a very Ruth for goodness; whoever obtains my consent, and marries her, will, at my death, with her, possess these and all my own estates."

"The hand of that lady," I said, "will confer a blessing on whoever receives it; were it a prince, he would be honoured; and I trust no man will ever seek it from a mercenary motive."

Sir Thomas scowled on me with such a look as I had never

before seen in him, and though he said little at first, yet that little was of a severe and haughty character. I could ill brook it. I felt my temper rising, but I checked myself, for I knew it would be not only bad policy to come to extremities with him, but that a large allowance ought to be made for the disappointed pride of a man of his character.

After this interview, in which it was evident I had nothing to hope from the equity of Sir Thomas, my position became so altered that I intimated my wish to resign my ministerial duties as soon as Sir Thomas could meet with a chaplain who would be agreeable to him as my successor. Indeed, with my principles it seemed a duty to myself no longer to remain with a man who in all probability was a concealed Jacobite, whose party was on the eve of a determined enterprise ; for not a day passed without the occurrence of some mysterious if not suspicious circumstance. Yet when I more than once reverted to my intention to quit Roseteague, my stay was courted not only by Sir Thomas (who had returned to a better and more governed temper), but by Sabina herself, with an earnestness I could not resist.

M. de Ploermel still lingered among us, always talking of his departure, but still our guest. Though generally light and airy, there were moments when his mind seemed deeply occupied with his own thoughts. He looked anxious, and was now for ever peering about the rocks and woods, as if he either expected or feared intrusion.

Sabina, too, was much changed and had become restless, uneasy indeed ; altered in everything but her unalterable sweetness of temper and deportment. The boy Charles, I fancied, was also in some degree affected by the change which had passed on those who were around him ; for he, too, at times, would look sad and pondering, and once or twice I observed tears in his eyes. He now very often went to visit his aged friend Mrs. Lower, and once or twice when I proposed to accompany him resisted my offer with a strange earnestness.

I seemed to myself like one of those enchanted beings, who, in our west of England tales of witchcraft and pixies, is placed within a magic-drawn circle, and sees mysterious things flitting around him and fears they are of evil, yet when he essays to penetrate their mystery, not a step can he move beyond the line of his enthrallment.

Another feature of the times was the military movement going

on around us. We had a reinforcement of soldiery at Pendennis Castle and at St. Maws, and the coastguard was on the alert for some miles along our shores. All this looked very like an expectation on the part of the government that some outbreak was about to take place.

Such was the state of things at Roseteague and around its neighbourhood when a strange incident befell me. I had on all occasions a great love of natural scenery, and if vexed or anxious I generally took a stroll down on the shore, or among the rocks and woods, to calm my perturbed spirit and compose my thoughts. I was doing so on the occurrence of some vexation about the time of which I am now speaking, and soon made my way to the heights of Pennare. I looked on the broad ocean, and watched the progress of a small vessel that seemed stealing along shore, till on a sudden she changed her course to catch the rising wind and stood out to sea. I then thought of turning homeward, and contemplated with a melancholy interest the towers and turrets of Roseteague, as they stood in solitary grandeur, peering over the dark woods. A gleam of the afternoon sun that broke through gathering clouds glanced on the western portion of the old edifice ; the rest lay in shadow and in gloom. At this hour there was, I fancied, a mournful sighing of the breeze among the antiquated oaks and pines, and something more solemn in the pomp of those long and lofty avenues that led towards the house than I had ever before observed.

The thought struck me that I would descend from the heights and seek Parada Cove, the place to which old people and nurses attached so many marvellous tales, and near which no peasant for his life would dare approach at the twilight hour. There the spectre bark (so the superstitious averred) could still sometimes be seen to land her doomed crew, and there, if report spoke truth, certainly more than one revenue officer had very strangely disappeared and been heard of no more.

What should have possessed me to think of visiting the cove, more especially at this time, for the sky was beginning to assume a somewhat lowering aspect, I know not. From a boy I was fond of scenes that have an influence on the imagination, in which a thrilling sense of expectation not unallied to fear bears a part, and the hope of meeting with something uncommon prepares the mind to fancy everything with which it meets is uncommon. In this mood, as Shakespeare says, "Chewing the cud of sweet and bitter fancy," I ventured down that perilous path along the face of the

cliff, which, worn by time and tempest, was in parts so crumbling and broken that a slip of the foot might have been fatal. As I stepped cautiously on, now holding by a crag, now catching at the tangled vegetation which here and there had taken root among the hollows and fissures of the rock, I was struck with the awe and majesty of the scene. The outstretched ocean lay before me; below, the beach, covered with widely scattered blocks of granite, a shore of ruin and destruction. I paused for a few minutes in the descent. I seemed to be of little more importance in the scale of creation than one of those sea-mews which my adventurous approach startled from the shelter they had found among the cliffs. Some sat perched on the sharp pinnacles of the projecting rocks, safe from the reach of man, and moved not a wing at his intrusion on the fortresses of their domain, which, open to the ocean, seemed (to speak poetically) air hung amid the clouds.

There is something that exalts the feelings of man, even whilst conscious of his own insignificance, when brought into immediate contact with the mighty works and operations of nature. It is his sense of God's power over the earth on which he treads, and over the elements around him.

Some little time elapsed before I gained the end of the path at the base of the cliffs. I could see from the marks left on the rocks and sands that at high tide the beach was in several places impassable, the waves coming up to the cliffs and washing them many feet above their base.

As I before noticed, a wild and rugged shore was beneath them. At this moment a heavy sea was rolling in over the Manacles, the gulls rushed screaming to the land, and seemed no less disturbed than the waters. To the left the huge headland stood projecting itself far out into the ocean, as if to cut off all communication with the world beyond. A narrow causeway of rock at its foot was passable only at low water, and not then when a strong wind set in shore. The scene was vast and solitary. I sat down to contemplate this scattered desolation of rocks, cliffs, and agitated waves, determining to return home by the beach, and not again to attempt a path which had really become too perilous to make it agreeable to venture upon it.

As I sat musing, all at once (for I heard no footsteps, the breaking of the tide on the shore in all probability preventing my hearing any such sounds) I was startled from my reverie by my name being pronounced in a deep-toned voice, which seemed

not other than familiar to my ear. I looked round, and standing close upon me was a man in a sailor's dress, stout, somewhat striking in his appearance, and apparently of a rank above the common sailor ; he looked like a master or a mate. The lines of his face were hard ; the face itself weather-beaten, but intelligent. There was in it an expression of strong good sense ; the dark eye, steady, yet quick in its glance ; the brows low-bent, a thing often seen in seamen, who are in the habit of straining the organ of sight to observe far-distant objects ; on the whole the countenance was that of a ready and determined character.

"Surely," I said, as I surveyed him with attention,—“surely I know that face ; I think I have seen you before now.”

"You have indeed, Mr. Ardenell," he replied, "and can two years and a change of dress so alter a man that you don't remember Farmer Gwendra and the sloop?"

As he spoke these last words he smiled and looked knowing.

"Oh ! I remember you and the sloop perfectly well," I said, recollecting (it may be supposed with what feelings) my adventure whilst lodging and boarding with the farmer on the coast of Devonshire. It will not be forgotten that he had given me a cruise in his vessel for the benefit of my health, when soon after going on board we were chased by a revenue cutter.

A civil recognition now passed between us, for smuggler though I knew him to be, he had been kind to me during a tedious state of ill-health, and I was really under personal obligations to him. Although I had not hesitated to tell him home truths, as soon as I became apprised of the nefarious traffic in which he was engaged, yet, strange to say, this man had really given me proofs of fidelity and attachment the most unquestionable. I state this in order to show that I could have no cause to mistrust him in any matter touching myself.

At the time of which I am now speaking smuggling was but too generally encouraged by all ranks and degrees ; punch was in universal request, and therefore brandy, rum, and arrack for the composition of that beverage. The country squires and gentlemen, and even magistrates, winked at the contraband trade as a very venial offence, and often not only patronized, but protected the offenders,—too well pleased at having their punch-bowls filled duty free to quarrel with those who so supplied them.

With the ladies (more particularly in the remote parts of

England) the smuggler was looked upon rather as an obliging dealer than as a breaker of the law—one who brought them their Lyons silks, and their Brussels heads, as they were called, duty free. The smuggler, with his visits in the dusk of the evening, was as welcome to the mistress of the mansion as the pedlar and his pack was to her household for the less precious articles of domestic use.

After an exchange of mutual civilities I thought it due to myself to say that I was sorry to see my old and friendly acquaintance Gwendra in that dress, as it led me to fear he still carried on a trade which, in the end, could be beneficial neither to his body nor his soul.

"I don't know about that, Mr. Ardenell," he replied; "we take things as they come: good to-day and bad to-morrow, and good again some other time, profit and loss being all in the way of business; and as we pay for all we have, and sell at a moderate rate, and our neighbours and the great folk are glad to buy of us, why I don't see there's so much harm in it; we steal nothing."

"But the laws of the country are broken, and by such a traffic as yours the revenue is defrauded of its dues; that cannot be right."

"I don't know," he replied; "we supply the country by selling to the people who buy of us, and they are a part of the country; they make no objections to buying their cognac and their nantz of us at a price at which they can get it from nobody else; and as to laws, why they are made for rogues and thieves, and not for honest men who pay their way as I have always done, and harmed nobody, if nobody harmed me. Hard enough do I labour by sea and by land, mostly at nights, in foul weather; and rogues, you know, like an easy life, not such a dog's life as we of the free trade lead. So I don't think there's any harm about us, if we are but let alone. But touch us, and we know how to protect our property as well as other men. Self-defence is the first law of creation."

I knew by our dialogues of old how vain it was to reason the point of honesty with my quondam friend whenever it touched on the revenue laws. So I said no more than this, that I still hoped one day he would see things in a truer and a better light.

"I don't know," he said, for he generally qualified his objections to my arguments with a doubt of what he was about to

assert at the beginning of his reply, however obstinately he afterwards maintained it. "I don't know ; we do good service sometimes to our friends and benefactors ; we are never ungrateful for favours, at least, I'm not one of an ungrateful mind. Mr. Ardenell, we are well met ; for, to say the truth, I wanted to come alongside of some one of the people at Roseteague, in order to send you something of yours that has fallen into my hands, no matter how. I have had it these two days, but I could get no one to send up with it to Roseteague. For though I serve the old housekeeper there, to say no word about her betters, when she wants a small keg of cognac or a pound or so of tea, yet, you see, the redcoats are about, and, like hawks on the look-out after the poor birds, they go peering about the coast, here, there, and everywhere just now, to help the revenue men."

"And so you dared not venture to Roseteague yourself to seek me out?"

"You have it," he replied ; "and yet I am charged to hand you over the letter myself, and no other."

"The letter !" I exclaimed with surprise.

"Ay ! the letter," he said, pulling one out from an inner pocket of his jacket, as he spoke.

"From whom does it come?"

"Read it and satisfy yourself," he answered. I hastily broke the seal, and looking at once to the end of the letter, to my exceeding surprise, I found it to be from Mrs. Lower, the eccentric and good old Jacobite lady of St. Maws. I read as follows, truly a long-winded epistle :—

"To the Reverend Francis Treville Ardenell.

"These with all speed.

"St. Maws, *Monday night*.

"MR. ARDENELL,—Knowing you to be a young gentleman of good discretion and of a most honourable mind, I turn to you in my perplexity, not, in fact, knowing where else to turn at this present time ; and from circumstances which you will herewith learn I am obliged to send you this by a messenger not in one sense the most reputable.

"Dear, good Mr. Ardenell, I am in a sore strait on account of my known opinions and those of my fathers before me, respecting the Divine right of kings, which no Parliament-house could have a right to set aside so as to take the crown from off

one king's head and set it on another's, contrary to God's commandment ; and such, I am sure, would be the sentiments of my honourable and distinguished kinswoman, Lady Isabella Lower, were she now alive to express them. Likewise I am known for having saved the lives of some unfortunate gentlemen in the year 1715, when my own father lost his life in battle for the Stuart cause and so many suffered with my Lord Derwentwater for conscience' sake. I say that all this has brought me into a terrible quandary.

"Sir, I will be very plain with you ; I have within the last few weeks given shelter to a *friend*, who, though friendly disposed to truth and right, yet came to me from over seas on a matter of *private concernment only*. How it has all happened I cannot tell you ; but folk say great discontents are rife throughout the country, which have awakened the jealousy of the government, so that they have sent soldiers to Pendennis Castle and to our little fortress of St. Maws.

"Well, sir, I have fallen under suspicion ; and had it not been for my faithful old cook Molly's son (Molly is a widow), who happened to be one among these soldiers—for he told Molly, and Molly told my maid Dolly, and Dolly told me—I should never have known what was going to befall me, till it was too late. But, sir, a good Providence is ever over those who put their trust in Him. I had this forewarning of what was coming upon me. And so, Mr. Ardenell, to tell you the plain truth, I got my friend out of my house as fast as I could, and yet but just in time to escape the hands of the officers and soldiers, who had taken it into their heads that I was harbouring a dangerous Jacobite agent from the royal personage over the water, who had come over with papers from St. Germain's. And, in consequence of this suspicion, I, a gentlewoman born and bred, of the ancient and honourable family of Lower, and a descendant in the direct line from the honourable and distinguished Lady Isabella Lower, I have now a guard set over me in my own house, the silly authorities thinking that by so doing some notable discoveries will be made concerning other Jacobite leaders, who are reported to make my house a rendezvous for treason, and to employ my agency in their matters ; as if I, a poor old lady of seventy could be an agent for high treason, and could upset a government like a joint-stool, or as if my private opinions could hurt King George upon his throne.

"Well, Mr. Ardenell, to complete the affront, I have now a

couple of soldiers, for the present, set under my nose, under my own roof ; where, they say, they are stationed to watch me and my ways. But Heaven knows I speak the truth when I protest these fellows watch nothing but Dolly, who is very pretty, and tease the poor wench with their sauciness, and draw my ale and cider all the day long in such quantities—to drink to the health of King George, to keep up, as they say, the spirit of loyalty in my household—that not a husgett¹ will be left for us at Christmas.

“ These, Mr. Ardenell, are some of the sad effects of the perilous times that are coming upon us, to make good the prophecies, as worthy Parson Croaker said in his discourse on Sunday last. But, sir, I must hasten to close this epistle ; I am sorry it is not longer, but hope you will kindly excuse it, in consideration of the circumstances under which it is penned. What I want to tell you, *but cannot fully tell you*, for fear of consequences, is this,—you must ask no questions, but go with Gwendra (a very honest man in his way, setting aside the revenue laws), and he will conduct you to one in deep distress. Go, and fear not to do a good deed ; and as you look to a higher Power to be your Helper in the hour of your need, do what shall be required of you by that distressed person. Again I entreat you to ask no questions of Gwendra, for he knows little or nothing to satisfy you, *but go with him* ; even if it be with some risk to yourself, do not draw back from a good work, but save a fellow-creature from destruction.

“ I can add no more to this entreaty, but to pray that Heaven will guide you and reward you as you shall now serve the unfortunate.

“ Rev. Sir,

“ Yours to command,

“ ISABELLA LOWER.”

¹ Husgett, a west of England term for hogshead.

CHAPTER XV.

“Stoop, boys—
We house i’ the rock, yet use thee not so hardly
As prouder livers do.”

SHAKESPEARE.

It may readily be supposed with what astonishment I read this letter. The station, the character of Mrs. Lower were sufficient to dispel all doubts respecting the truth of what she asserted; and fears of her agent Gwendra I had none. It was quite evident that, from the pressure of circumstances alone, she had employed him in an affair where life or death seemed to be at stake. I did not for a moment question but that I should find myself called upon to assist in the escape of some notorious Jacobite whose head would be in danger of the axe did he remain in Cornwall. The old lady's strong Jacobite principles, and the generous manner in which in former years she forwarded the escape of both condemned and suspected nobles and gentlemen, were well known the country round.

From her advanced age, and now having the military stationed upon her as a suspected person, it was evident she could do nothing in furtherance of her friend in his distress; and therefore she had forced this confidence on me, because, as she intimated in her letter, she deemed me too honourable to be capable of betraying one of those unhappy men, who, however great their political errors, nevertheless risked their lives and all that they possessed from motives of loyalty and duty. I was also well known in this neighbourhood as a zealous supporter of the Protestant succession. I was not, therefore, liable to suspicion; and, though last not least, Mrs. Lower appealed to me in this emergency, even as indeed she said, because she knew no one else to whom she could apply for assistance to her proscribed friend.

Still, the service she required of me was one of much risk—one that could easily be misrepresented, and in that case must inevitably involve me in a charge of misprision of treason. These reflections were enough to make an older head than mine doubtful

how to act. . Many of a bolder nature than I could lay claim to would have paused before they undertook an enterprise so cloaked in mystery, with nothing apparent but the peril in which it was involved.

All these thoughts crossed my mind with rapidity, as I refolded the letter, and stood for a minute or two silent before I addressed Gwendra. But to hang back from a good deed, in which my assistance was required by so good an old lady as Mrs. Lower, from motives of personal fear, was not in my nature. I was not of a cold temperament, but apt to be stirred at the idea of circumstances which were adventurous and daring.

I may also add that I did from my soul pity the poor Jacobites. The cruelties exercised by the Duke of Cumberland after the victory of Culloden, the scenes of misery in Newgate, and the hanging, drawing, and quartering of so many victims had made my very heart sick.

"Gwendra," I said, "I am forbidden in the letter you have delivered to me to ask you any questions ; but of course you know it comes from Mrs. Lower, and that she has requested me to accompany you to seek some person who is in difficulty, and for whose safety at a time of need she has begged my assistance. I conclude it will be no breach of faith in you to reply to one question which the necessity of the case compels me to put to you. Where are you about to conduct me ?"

"To Parada Cove."

"To Parada Cove !" I exclaimed. "What, the haunted cove with the spectre boat and the infernal crew ? I fancy, Gwendra, you could explain something of that mystery if it liked you to do so."

"I am to answer no questions," said Gwendra.

"To answer none about the affair of which Mrs. Lower speaks in her letter," I replied. "But you surely do not mean to imply that the good old lady has any dealings with the Evil One, or with the *White Hart* and her crew ?"

"It is not well talking about such matters," answered Gwendra ; and his countenance looked as black as night as I spoke thus lightly of the popular superstition.

"We had better keep silence," he added, "whilst we are close under the cliffs, for the hawks, they say, are abroad, and we don't know where they may be on the look-out. These cliffs have many clefts and hollows in their sides that are no bad places to hide in on occasion."

"As you, Gwendra, can very probably testify by experience. But let us on, as silent as you will, to meet this unknown."

As we now passed on, over a beach of rock, shingle, and sand, there was, I thought, something inexpressibly wild and solitary in these shores. I felt at the moment as if we were cut off from all intercourse with our fellow-men. The beach was by no means broad between the base of the cliffs and the sea. On the left hand arose precipice above precipice; on the right the tide rolled in, breaking over rocks and whitening them with foam; whilst beyond arose the vast headland with its tremendous sweep into the very bosom of the ocean, looking as if so frail a thing as man could not pass its barrier and live, for the waves appeared to rise and swell and break against the face of the promontory.

"How far have we to go?" I inquired. "Where do we pass into the cove?"

"On turning there," he replied, pointing to the headland.

"The tide is too much advanced," I said; "there is no footing."

"Not so," he answered; "that which you see yonder, against which the sea breaks, is a disjointed piece of cliff, though from this spot it cannot be distinguished as such. We must pass behind that bit of fallen earth."

"The cove is a good harbour for your boats, Gwendra, is it not?" I said this, perhaps, more for the sake of saying something than from any particular wish to gain a knowledge of the place. "It is deep water there, I believe, at all times."

"Not so deep as Dosmary Pool," he replied, "for that's unfathomable."

"Unfathomable! that's a strange thing. Where is Dosmary Pool?"

"Along the coast," he said. "You may think as you will, but neither lead nor line ever find the bottom. And men say that old Dosmary, that gave his name to the pool, and who lived ages ago, was a wicked old Cornish wizard, and condemned for the punishment of his evil deeds to empty the pool with a limpet shell with a hole in the bottom. None but Merlin himself, as I take it, could empty the pool; a queer tale that, Mr. Ardenell."

"It is not a more idle tale," I replied, "than many I have heard, which those who follow a seafaring life on the coast of Cornwall must be pretty well acquainted with."

"Not so idle as you think for, mayhap, Mr. Ardenell," said Gwendra, with an unusually grave expression on every line of his hard features. "I met with a queer thing myself on the coast last year."

"What was it, Gwendra?—a mermaid, or a dolphin, or a revenue officer disposed to be civil, and let your kegs pass unobserved?"

"You may joke as you will, Mr. Ardenell, about those water-fiends and sharks, but what I have to tell of is a true thing. I saw it, that is to say, I heard it, myself. You see, in Cornwall, if a man is drowned in a river, or alongside the seacoast, if you go down soon after to the spot, to the banks of the fresh water, or on the shore of the salt, you will hear the spirit hailing himself by his own name. And this thing I heard myself when one of my lads was drowned last year at Kynance Cove."

Just as Gwendra had ended this story, we reached the huge mass of the fallen cliff he had before pointed out to me. We now turned short round between the fragment in question and the cliff, and found ourselves within a wide recess (if I may so call it) of the shore that filled me at once with admiration and surprise.

"Parada Cove," said Gwendra, as he stooped his head to pass under a piece of low rock that hung directly over our heads, as we stepped along the narrow footing almost close to the water's edge. "Stoop," continued Gwendra, "or you may knock out your brains."

I did as I was directed, and having passed these hanging rocks, I paused a moment to look around me. Excavated, as it were, within the very bosom of those lofty and commanding cliffs, lay Parada Cove, a place not large, but of exquisite beauty. Simple in its objects, yet full of grandeur. On all sides it was surrounded by precipices with their towering pinnacles and splintered crags of vast magnitude; here and there hung with vegetation, as if festooned for decoration alone by nature's own tasteful hand.

The cove was guarded at either extremity by an abutment of granite, like a perpendicular wall. The sea, which lay as a deep still pool within this recess, was calm and clear as the brightest crystal; and far beneath the surface of the water, not a little starry shell, not a pendant weed, not even a pebble but could be seen on the rocky bottom. The contrast of the glassy clearness and the perfect stillness of this little cove with the agitation of the open sea without, whence it drew its waters, was very strik-

ing. It was like the calm of an anchorite in his cell compared to the turmoil of that world from which he has withdrawn to his repose. The cliffs that circled the cove on all sides looked down upon its deep pool, where, as in a clear dark mirror, they were seen reflected with inimitable beauty. Within the sides of these cliffs were a few openings and fissures leading to many hollows and caves in the very bowels of the earth.

Gwendra again moved forward, and, once more stooping his head, led the way within one of those hollows, and I followed him in silence.

CHAPTER XVI.

"These twenty years
This rock and these demesnes have been my world :
Where I have lived at honest freedom."

SHAKESPEARE.

"When desperate ills demand a speedy cure,
Distrust is cowardice, and prudence folly."

JOHNSON'S *Irene*.

GWENDRA led the way through the narrow aperture which, from having just quitted the open light of day, seemed to me totally dark ; we traced our steps in this blind manner for several yards. At length the "hum of men" met my ear, and, turning short round, we entered a cavern in the very heart of the rock.

The place wherein I now stood filled me with surprise ; and but for the assurances given me by Mrs. Lower, and my previous knowledge of Gwendra, would have called up no inconsiderable degree of alarm. Though I had lived so long in the neighbourhood of this subterranean retreat, I had never heard of its existence ; hence I concluded it could be little known except to those who there found a refuge from the world without. Of what character these were, I could not for a moment entertain a doubt ; the very first glance around convinced me that I was in a den of smugglers of the most desperate kind ; and at the period of which I speak the wreckers and smugglers of the coast of Cornwall were more noted for their cruelties and atrocities and the desperate traffic they carried on, than any similar class of law-breakers throughout England.

The cavern in which I stood ran deep within the cliffs. It was lofty, and in some places rose so high above the head that it resembled the vaulted aisle of an old Gothic church. A fire, composed of dry peat and wood, burnt on a sort of rude hearth ; the smoke probably found vent through some unseen fissure in the face of the cliffs towards the sea.

A torch or two blazed brightly and cast a red glare on those sides of the rock that were near enough to receive the illumination. The rocks were rugged and unhewn ; here and there

broken into hollows, within which all seemed black as night. The roof of the cavern sparkled in the torch-light, as if hung with strings of glittering diamonds. These were a natural production often found embedded in the mines and caves of Cornwall, being a sort of feldspar, sharp, angular in its clustered points, and of uncommon purity and beauty. Towards the extremity of the cavern all was darkness. I ought not to omit stating that on the side opposite to that where burnt the fire the rock had some few openings, as if to admit within its bowels those who sought a yet closer retreat in this rude mansion of granite.

The men assembled in the cave, not less than eighteen or twenty in number, were as rude, athletic, and ruffian-like a set of rogues as I ever beheld. Some had the look of the Cornish boor, loutish, round-nosed, and thick-lipped, with somewhat small eyes, sharpened into life and animation by the constant vigilance and resource necessary for the dangerous trade in which they were embarked. A few others were black-haired, dark and sallow-looking fellows, with large whiskers, and gold rings in their ears; these were of a foreign soil. All looked confident, and not a face among them seemed ever to have known the hue of fear.

Even in this first and hurried glance I observed on the backs of some few of the Cornish men the blue and white striped jacket, the well-known and all-dreaded costume of the *White Hart* and her crew. I shrewdly suspected they found a more profitable task than that of weaving ropes of sand in Parada Cove, and the numerous casks and kegs which were stowed around in several nooks and hollows seemed to confirm my suspicions. Certain as to the character of this company, but doubtful respecting my own business among them, I determined to act with great caution.

To prevent, I concluded, any unpleasant surprise or rough reception of the stranger who came thus unexpectedly upon them, Gwendra pronounced in a very audible voice, "A friend," as he clapped his hand on my shoulder with about as much gentleness as he would have observed in handling a bale of smuggled goods. He then spoke apart with two or three men. I heard them call him captain; soon after he seemed to be engaged with them in earnest counsel, and I was left standing alone near the spot where we first entered.

As he thus conversed with the group I have described, I

noticed their looks and gestures, heightened in expression by the strong and marked lines of their weather-beaten features. Observing them in the torch-light (which ever gives an unearthly expression to the human face) whilst thus engaged in "deep consult," I concluded by the action the foreigners used in their discourse, heads, hands, shoulders being all in motion, and by the steady looks, folded arms, and obdurate air of contradiction on the part of the English, that these counsellors, like others much higher in place, did; not on all occasions agree together in the subject of debate; and that the present was one of divided opinions.

My own name I heard more than once distinctly pronounced by Gwendra, so that I was in some way or other connected with the theme of their discourse.

Whilst waiting till the conversation should cease, when I determined to insist on Gwendra's leading me to the person to whom I was sent by Mrs. Lower, my eye was insensibly led from the group I have described to the back regions of the cavern. Somewhat accustomed to the obscurity of the place, I could now see the surrounding objects plainer than when I first entered this subterranean abode. Still, however, I could distinguish nothing very clearly. I observed the mouths of two or three caves yawning in the sides of the rock to the left of me, and situated between the fire in the foreground of this wild and Salvator-like scene and the regions of total obscurity beyond it.

The darkness visible of Milton was never more completely exemplified than when, amongst the shadows and the gloom of a cavern where all was obscure, I thought I saw something that looked tall and white move forward, then stop, and then glide away through one of those murky hollows in the sides of the rock. The apparition made this gliding retreat, just as Gwendra, in a very audible voice, called to me by name and begged me to come forward.

As I approached, those who had hitherto surrounded him, except one person, withdrew to a distance; and I now stood close to the entrance of that hollow where I had seen the apparition of my fancy, if it were fancy, disappear.

CHAPTER XVII.

“Tho’ plung’d in ills, and exercis’d in care,
Yet never l-t the noble mind despair ;
When press’d by dangers, and beset with foes,
The gods their timely succour interpose ;
And when our courage sinks o’erwhelm’d with grief,
By unforeseen expedients bring relief.”

PHILLIPS.

THE individual who remained with Gwendra was unlike all the rest ; for though somewhat rough and weather-beaten, yet in his deportment he appeared to be far above Gwendra and his mates. He was plainly dressed in the uniform of a foreign naval officer. When he spoke, it was in a voice deep and manly, marked by that peculiar accent which generally distinguishes the natives of Jersey.

To my extreme surprise, instead of being informed of the purpose for which I was brought to this place, the individual I have just described began to question me with great earnestness, commencing his interrogatories by an apologetic address that would have done credit to the politeness of M. de Ploermel himself. He said that he knew my character well, from those long acquainted with me, who had done many essential acts of service to the persecuted friends of an unfortunate prince.

“You mean Mrs. Lower ?” I said, interrupting him. He did not, however, notice it ; but went on saying he knew that I was a man of humanity as well as honour, and would befriend those who could not help themselves. He then asked me how I stood in the family of Sir Thomas Joinacre. If I were confidentially trusted by Sir Thomas himself ? What were my own sentiments towards the existing government ? If I was in correspondence with any of the military commanders now stationed at Pendennis or St. Maws ? By what route I thought it safest to leave Roseteague, so as to reach the seashore ? and what inlet of the sea in the grounds of that domain was the least liable to observation for a boat to run in at high tide ?

These and a multitude of other questions he asked in a manner that was at once anxious and determined.

Seeing that in such a place, and so surrounded, I could not help myself, and that to give a denial to questions so urgently put would only subject me to ill-treatment by raising the passions of men I had every cause to suspect were unscrupulous if provoked,—I replied with caution, yet with simplicity and sincerity. The questioner seemed satisfied with my answers. To confess the truth, hitherto no questions had been put to me that I felt any difficulty in answering.

There was a moment's pause. It is my turn now, thought I, to question ; and I demanded of Gwendra that he would lose not a moment more in introducing me to the individual Mrs. Lower had recommended to my protection.

"All in good time," said the Jersey man in the naval uniform. "You must grant me a few minutes more in conversation before Gwendra attends your bidding."

Gwendra instantly drew back a few paces, and it struck me that he looked upon this person, whoever he might be, with a feeling of respect mingled with awe.

"Mr. Ardenell," continued the stranger, "your account of yourself and others agrees with all I have been able to learn. You are frank, and speak at once to the purpose ; I like your candour ; you are a man of honour, and I will trust you."

I was not a little surprised, as this was spoken very much in the tone and manner of a superior who indicates his pleasure to confer a service of trust on an inferior, because he deems him to be an honest man. In this case I could not help suspecting there might be something of danger annexed to the trust.

I replied therefore calmly but firmly, that I had been brought where I was, relying on the good faith of Mrs. Lower, and, as I believed, at the call of humanity, to serve some unfortunate individual for whose safety she was deeply concerned ; but I would undertake no other service.

"Before you adopt that resolution, hear what it is, Mr. Ardenell," continued the stranger ; "you know there is a foreign gentleman who has for some weeks been sheltered at Roseteague by Sir Thomas Joinacre. He is at this present time in imminent danger."

"M. de Ploermel ?" I said. "I am sorry for his danger. I have for some time apprehended he might be one of those gentlemen of which we have but too many both foreign and English

in Cornwall; gentlemen who are obnoxious to the existing government. M. de Ploermel is, I believe—”

“M. de Ploermel!” exclaimed the stranger in a tone of surprise. “It is not for his safety that I am so much interested; it is not for him I would desire your aid.”

“But it is for him you ought to desire it,” said a voice in a high and indignant tone, that seemed to come from some one of the neighbouring recesses, and not from any living creature in the open cavern.

I felt an indescribable thrill pass through my veins, as I heard it; the tones of that voice seemed as if familiar to my ear, yet I knew not where, before now, I could have heard them. The stranger took no notice of this interruption, though he appeared vexed by it; but Gwendra, who had heard all that passed, stepped up close to him and said something in so low a voice that I caught only some disconnected words of his speech, and those were “*the Monsieur de Ploermel*.”

“You surprise me,” said the stranger; he stopped and turning to me thus continued, “Well, sir, the individual concealed at Roseteague, this M. de Ploermel you but now named, is in the utmost danger, and if he falls into the hands of his enemies, not he alone will suffer, but many others with him. The facts are simply these: some things have gone amiss in London; some cowardly men have played a treacherous part, have given information, and this gentleman has fallen under the suspicion of the government; a warrant is out against him. Unless he can be warned of his danger, and put in possession of the means devised for his escape this night from these shores his death is certain. The life of this unfortunate gentleman is now placed in your power. Every attempt has been made this day to convey to him intelligence, but in vain. Roseteague is watched on all sides by the soldiery, so that none can go there, or come thence, without the danger of being arrested on their way. You, Mr. Ardenell, are well known in this country; no one will interrupt you in your return to the place of your residence. Will you then do a generous act to this unfortunate man, without which he must perish?”

“Tell me, sir;” I replied, “tell me candidly was it alone to serve this gentleman that Mrs. Lower so earnestly prayed me to render my assistance?”

The stranger did not answer me; I then looked at Gwendra, as if expecting that he would satisfy my question.

"The safety of the man is, I believe, connected with the service that Mrs. Lower would wish you to undertake for her friend, and furthermore it is my belief—"

"Stay," interrupted the officer; "hear me to an end before you question Gwendra; a few words more and I have done. Would you save the life of a fellow-creature, of the unhappy man of whom we have been speaking? If you would do this, you must with all speed return to Roseteague and give this packet into the hands of him you call M. de Ploermel."

He drew forth a packet of papers from his bosom, as he spoke, and presented it to me. A glance at the seal showed me the royal arms of France. I said instantly, "I will not be the bearer of this packet; for aught I know it may contain matters of high treason against the king to whom I owe allegiance. I will not be the bearer of it. Give me verbal instructions for the safety of this unhappy man, or of any other friend of Mrs. Lower, if there be any other, and I promise you, on the honour of a gentleman, I will fulfil them, even at the risk of my own safety; for I heartily pity any distressed man who suffers in this erroneous and unfortunate cause. But for the packet, I will not be the bearer of what may contain matters of treasonable import to the state."

"There is nothing treasonable in it," replied the stranger. "From my own knowledge of the circumstances connected with this packet, I believe it principally contains full instructions, together with the means, should they be required, to forward the escape, not only of this M. de Ploermel, but of certain other foreign gentlemen whose lives, at this crisis, are in the utmost peril."

"I doubt not what you say," I replied; "but you may yourself be deceived. I will not take the packet."

"Take it," said the same voice I had before heard; and now it seemed to come from the hollow of the rock, close to where I stood. "Take it, and the heir of Treville Crewse shall be established in his right."

"Who speaks?" I said with astonishment, as a cold chill ran through my veins. "Who speaks?" I repeated on the impulse of the moment, and in a more agitated tone.

"I do," said the same voice, and in another moment the figure of a woman, closely veiled with one of those long white veils, such as I have since seen worn by certain orders of nuns on the Continent, stepped from the obscurity of the hollow in

the rock and stood before me. She was tall and of a commanding air.

"Look at that," she said, "and all your doubts will cease."

She gave me as she spoke a small slip of paper wrapped up in the form of a letter; I opened it hastily and read these words:—

"MR. ARDENALL,—The bearer of this is the individual whom I have implored you to aid in her difficulty. She will at once tell you in what that consists, and how you can best serve her. I will here only add that circumstances of the utmost importance render it necessary she should be conducted to Roseteague as privately as possible. I had myself devised the means of conducting her thither, when the unexpected suspicions of the authorities, as you already know, marred all my purposes. Let me once more implore you to spare no pains to serve her in this hour of her need, and you will not fail in your reward.

"Yours to command,

"ISABELLA LOWER."

"Madam," I said, addressing the unknown lady, "I will not fail you, be your difficulties what they may, as I am convinced Mrs. Lower would never urge upon me the necessity of rendering you such assistance as I can give, did she not feel the charge she would confer upon me was one worthy of a man of honour. Madam, I am ready to serve you by any means you may point out, always saving that such shall in no way be injurious to the duty I owe to God and to the king. You shall not find me wanting in the hour of your distress."

"You are generous, sir," she replied; "the service which I shall require at your hands is not such as you probably may expect. It will in no way interfere either with your duties or your feelings. But let us draw apart. Gwendra," she continued, "Gwendra in some measure knows what it is. To him, in all probability, I owe my life, or, what is of no less consequence at this moment, my liberty. For he alone could afford me shelter when on the instant I was compelled to fly from the house of Mrs. Lower. But come this way, and I will tell you more. Gwendra, lead on."

He did so, and we now passed within that hollow in the rock I have before noticed. It gave entrance to a small recess where a lamp was burning on a rude table. This I conjectured to be the private apartment of Gwendra himself, as I saw hanging on all sides of the rock arms of every description—cutlasses, pistols,

swords, &c. This recess, I conjectured, he had given up to the lady for the time she was under his care. An old chair or two, a bed of straw with some coarse bedding, constituted all the furniture in the place.

"You may speak freely here," said Gwendra ; "none dare play eaves-dropper at my chamber-door."

And with that he closed a rough-hewn door, which was fixed in the aperture of the solid rock. The cave was much smaller than the cavern, but I observed on its natural arch above our heads the same sparkling and glittering appearance.

"The lady," continued Gwendra, "has been waiting these two days and nights for the arrival of that vessel which has only this day appeared off our coast."

"It is so, sir," said the lady ; "I had anxiously expected its arrival whilst with Mrs. Lower—she knew wherefore."

I now spoke, and begged she would be most explicit in whatever service she required at my hands, in order that I might be enabled to judge how to protect her, should any unexpected occurrence arise which might involve either her safety or my own loyalty. "I will," I added, "gladly assist any unfortunate partisan of the Chevalier Charles Edward to escape from the severe and bloody persecution of the laws ; but, as I have before said, I will not compromise my duty."

"You need not," she replied, interrupting me. "In truth, what I would ask of you is in no way involved in the politics of this most disastrous crisis. It is the wrongs of an unhappy woman you are called on to pity, and not to aid the cause of exiled Majesty, or to plot against a usurper's throne."

"Your name, madam," I said ; "may I ask it ? May I know who requires a service of me of so singular a nature, considering I am a perfect stranger ?"

"A minister of God," she replied, "be he of what Church he may, should be no stranger to the wretched where he can give help or afford comfort. My name you must not ask. My wrongs you must not know till you can help to redress them."

"You speak to me in riddles, madam," I said. "What am I to think of all this ? I cannot possibly comprehend such mystery as seems to surround your words and your designs. I cannot understand them."

"They will soon be clear enough," she replied ; "but let us not lose time, for as there is a God in heaven to right the injured, to make truth prevail, to frustrate the wiles of falsehood,

your future hopes are involved in mine. If I fail this night in what I have in view, the crafty man will retain his spoil, even as the fox keeps safe his prey in his den, and the heir of Treville Crewse shall be cast out to poverty, maybe to want, and to a persecution worse than death itself."

There was something so energetic, so unconstrained in all she said, that I could no longer hesitate to give full credit to her assertions, though incapable of forming the most distant idea of the subject to which they referred. I was lost in a labyrinth of conjecture—my mind rapt in wonder—yet my heart was firm. There is a simplicity as well as majesty in truth that will prevail; I felt it at this moment, and told the lady that I was convinced of her sincerity, and ready to fulfil her instructions without question, mistrust, or fear.

She thanked me, and added, "The vessel which arrived this day brought some papers that I had anxiously expected whilst under the shelter of Mrs. Lower's roof. On those papers depends what is dearer to me than life. You are reluctant to be the bearer of them; give them to me. Procure for me an interview with M. de Ploermel. Be present at it yourself. I would entreat you to be so—and I will place the packet in his hands."

I was surprised at the manner in which she thus unhesitatingly placed confidence in my good faith to serve her. But I did not doubt that Mrs. Lower had instructed her how to act when she chose me as the protector of her friend. Yet I could not dismiss the thought that nothing but the last necessity could excuse what the old lady had done in respect to myself.

"Madam," I said, "are you aware that the naval officer who placed that packet in my hands—I conclude he is in command of the vessel—informed me that M. de Ploermel was in danger? The vessel, I imagine, will bear that unfortunate man from these shores."

"It may be so," she replied; "but the papers contain matters of importance. Will you procure for me an interview with him? Will you do all I may require?"

"I have already assured you, madam, that I am willing to do all I can to serve a lady in whose anxious position Mrs. Lower takes so great an interest. One thing I hope I may be allowed to ask."

"What is it?" she said hastily.

"To see the lineaments of her I am about to serve,"

"The request is reasonable," she replied. "Look then upon a face over which trouble and grief have not passed in vain. Among the deprivations of years, we must number that of the power to please. Look, sir," she continued, as she withdrew her veil from her face; "see the ravages of time, the blight of sorrow."

A countenance fair and pale, thin and sharp in feature, and of a most melancholy expression, was now opened to my view; the features though no longer lovely were of perfect regularity, true as Grecian art in line and proportion; the eye sunk, but dark, bright, and penetrating; the forehead large and smooth; the brows finely arched. In youth such a face must have been eminently handsome. It was now of a most striking character—and showed traces of strong feeling—and of mental suffering to an intense degree. It was a countenance such as it gave one pain to look upon; a painter would have chosen it to represent a Rachel weeping for her children because they were not. The sight of deep grief, or the certain indications of it in its calmer moments, often inspires a greater feeling of sympathy than that of the most frantic distress. Probably because an impassioned sorrow, arising from a sudden stroke of calamity, may, like the thunder-cloud, pass away with the fury of the tempest; but in a deep, quiet grief, there is something so settled that it seems to preclude any hope of a change; it is as the shadow of the profound abyss where no sunbeam ever plays.

After having looked for a moment on features so expressive—in a manner so as to avoid giving offence by seeming too curious—I asked her how we were to proceed, and what she desired I should at once do for her.

"I would implore you to take me to Roseteague without further delay, and as much as possible unobserved."

I turned to consult Gwendra about the safest way to avoid observation.

"You must not return by the beach," he said, "but by a path that I can show you, partly over the cliffs, a path known to few except our people. It will also save you a tedious walk over the sands."

"But may we not be stopped?" I inquired. "You told me that within the last few hours the military have surrounded the outskirts of Roseteague, that the roads were patrolled, so that you dared not send one of your people near the house. Surely then the danger—"

"None can befall you, Mr. Ardenell, and none this strange lady whilst in your company. Had I sent one of my own lads with the letter, he would very likely have been stopped and searched; and as for going myself that would never do. But you have nothing to fear. Roseteague is your home, and the very cassock you wear is as good protection as a warrant from any one of the magistrates hereabouts."

"I believe it," I replied. "And now, madam, how do you wish me to proceed when we reach Roseteague? Did you not intimate that you wished for a private admission to the house?"

"I did," she said; "and Mrs. Lower desired me to ask you to admit me by what she called the French garden, of which you had the key, and thence to conduct me into your apartment—the study within the tower."

I consented to follow exactly Mrs. Lower's instructions, but not without a feeling of surprise that she should know so correctly how these matters were arranged at Roseteague, for she had never once visited the house since I had been there. Whilst I gave my assurances, the lady threw around her a large grey cloak, and so adjusted it as completely to cover her person, drawing over her head a full, old-fashioned hood to conceal her face from any too close or curious observation. Gwendra had withdrawn into one of his holes in the rock, and during his short absence had undergone a complete metamorphosis. He left us the bluff, weather-beaten Cornish smuggler; he now returned from head to foot a yeoman of the West. A large drab coat, and a bob wig, surmounted by a broad-brimmed beaver, so completed the disguise that even I did not, at first, recognize him, as he came suddenly upon me in this new costume.

Gwendra took up an oak stick, perhaps for appearance sake; but under his rough drab coat he took care to carry a formidable brace of pistols.

"Now I am a farmer once more," he said. "Mr. Ardenell, have you any desire to lodge with me again for your health's sake?"

"Not in this cove, Gwendra. But time draws on: are you ready?"

"Stay; we must not part without a cup," he said: "a cup to drink good luck to the lady."

With that he dived again into those hidden regions, and

bringing forth a jug, full to the brim, and some drinking-cups, poured forth an ample measure, as he said,—

“Taste that ; better claret was never washed down the throat of the King of France himself. Drink, madam, and we will be gone.”

The lady in courtesy just pressed the cup to her lips and set it down. I had been so much excited by the events of the day, that notwithstanding its being a contraband cup, I was glad of the refreshment. Gwendra seized on the jug, and, nodding to us, drank off the contents without stopping to draw breath.

He then left us for a few minutes, to see, as he said, that the coast was clear ; returned, bade us follow him, and led the way from the cavern by a more narrow and private passage in the side of the rock than that by which I had entered.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"Do not for one repulse forego the purpose
That you resolved to effect.

By how much unexpected, by so much
We must awake endeavour for defence;
For courage mounteth with occasion."

SHAKESPEARE.

By a flight of precarious steps, cut in the face of the rock (where it was most shelving towards the shore, not far from the cove), we reached the summit of the cliffs. Without further pause, few words being spoken, Gwendra again led the way by a track that was quite new to me, across the down. We met no one except a shepherd's boy and an old woman, who both saluted us with a civil "Good evening."

The evening was indeed fast closing in; the sun, however, not yet quite set, was slowly sinking below the horizon amidst a host of circling clouds. The air was still and sultry; and as the bat flitted by on noiseless wing, the dusky outline of that little tenant of the ivy and the ruined tower could be distinctly seen against the wide expanse of a red and glowing sky, which on these heights formed, as it were, the background of the scene.

A long and barren down lay before us, rising into importance if not into grandeur, in the imperfect and fading light under which it was seen. We continued our somewhat slow walk, for I soon found my companion was unequal to a rapid pace. The time sped on, so that the sun at length sunk below the sea, and the moon, which had long been faintly visible, now in her crescent form appeared floating through ether, whilst the stars, one by one, looked trembling out, as if uncertain whether it were yet their time for coming forth.

The path over which we passed ran near the edge of the cliffs; thence the ocean was seen outstretched in all its magnitude, while the cliffs flung their mighty shadows, in one broad mass, over the waters below their base. In those far extending

and deep shadows, with the repose of the scene alone broken by the regular rush and retreat of the waves, there was something awful.

Amid the mist and gloom of the sea I observed a vessel which about sundown had driven nearer towards land, and was now riding at anchor in Garrans Bay, not very far from the entrance to the rocky channel of Parada Cove.

Gwendra stopped, so did the lady. They pointed to the vessel, but the former only spoke.

"She is ready, but I must leave you ; I dare venture no further. I hope all may go well. But if otherwise, I will tell you, Mr. Ardenell, what must be done. If things go wrong, and there seems no hope of escape for your friend up yonder—the foreign gentleman, I mean—why then we must see what we can do to help him in spite of the soldiers. If he is hard beset, send some one you can trust down to the beach, as far as Parada Rock—you know the rock, where we met to-day—one of my lads shall be there on the look-out ; or stay, I will be there on the look-out myself with a few of my best fellows, armed. On a notice from you, we will be up with you to give what help we can. But, remember, do not send unless the danger be pressing, and then send some one who you know will be faithful and true as steel."

I promised to be wary and to observe all his directions with the utmost caution.

"And the vessel ?" said the lady.

"All ready," replied Gwendra ; "ready to sail at high tide to-night. The wind is not much ; but it is rising, and is in the right quarter. One thing more," he continued, addressing me, "and then I am gone. We must be on our guard against false colours and spies. You must send me something, some token that I have seen beforehand, so that I may know that the bearer of it comes from you, and from nobody but you."

I paused a moment, doubtful what to propose. Ere I could determine, the lady thus spoke,—

"I will supply the required token. Look well at this trinket." She drew from her bosom a locket of gold set with pearls, and bearing in the centre, under the crystal which contained the nair, the initial letters "H. T." "Do you note it well," she said.

"I do," replied Gwendra ; "I should know that toy again among a thousand."

"Well, then," she continued, "that shall be the token."

Gwendra seemed satisfied ; and once more repeating with solemn earnestness, "Remember, *Parada Rock*," he waved his hand, turned on his heel, and was speedily lost to our view in his rapid retreat across the down.

We now advanced at a somewhat quicker pace, and began to descend a hill, at the foot of which commenced the domain of Sir Thomas Joinacre. Before us arose, in lengthened pomp, the tall avenues and the dark woods, embosomed in which lay the old mansion, destined on this night to be the scene of the most extraordinary events.

As we approached, I was struck with a presage of something painful nigh at hand. The woods, already in "the sear and yellow leaf" of autumn, looked at this hour sombre and mournful. They were in deep shade ; and as I opened a little gate and turned into an avenue which, by a circuitous path, led to the house, the melancholy moaning of the wind among the old chestnuts (for, as Gwendra observed, the wind was rising) sounded like a funeral dirge. At least I thought so. I was one over whose spirit the power of fancy had a potent spell.

I must not omit stating that, not ten minutes before we entered the grounds of Roseteague, one of the military passed me on horseback. I stopped on purpose, for I would not seem to shun observation ; and recognizing in him a young officer of the regiment quartered at St. Maws, I accosted him with—

"A good evening to you, captain ; what makes you out so late in this dreary road ?"

"We are charged to be vigilant," he replied, "and there is cause to be so. A good evening to you, Mr. Ardenell. I recommend you to hasten home, and to keep within doors to-night for fear of ill accidents. Our men are on the look-out, and on a sharp duty."

So saying he passed on, and my companion and I did the same. We advanced up the avenue in silence, nor did we pause till we were in that part of the wood where a path turned off that led to the door of the French garden, of which I had the key.

"Now, madam," I said, stopping for a minute before the gate, "now it is absolutely necessary you should no longer delay telling me in what manner I am to act as soon as we enter the house."

"I will," she replied. "I will briefly tell you ;" and then she added solemnly, "Oh ! Mr. Ardenell, as there is One in

heaven Who sees the truth of all hearts, be He the judge of mine in what I require of you this night, in the hour of my utmost need. Fear nothing, and the thanks, the prayers of an unhappy woman shall be yours. Hear me. You must give me entrance to your study unobserved by any of the household ; for if I am observed, and the family—”

“Pardon me, madam,” I said, interrupting her ; “the hour is so far advanced there is no cause for fear. I can pass you into my study unobserved by any one. What then ?”

“You must immediately procure me an interview with M. de Ploermel, and no one must be apprised of our meeting.”

“That I will certainly do ; but what if he should be engaged with Sir Thomas Joinacre ?”

“It seems,” she said, “that I have learnt more of what is passing with the master of Roseteague than you have. Sir Thomas is this evening engaged in deep conference at the house of Mr. St. John on matters of great import, and will not return till midnight—probably not till the morning.”

“What !” I exclaimed, “Mr. St. John, who is suspected of being the prime mover of the rebellious spirit that has lately manifested itself in this part of Cornwall ! Sir Thomas with him !”

“What I tell you is true,” she said. “One thing more, and then lead on. You must be present at my interview with M. de Ploermel.”

“I present ! What can I do more than I have promised Gwendra ?”

“You must be present, and you alone,” she continued with great vehemence ; “and unless you do me *this* service, all you have already done will be of little worth.”

“Well, then,” I replied, “I will be present. I have promised you assistance, and I will not fail you. Follow me, and speak not a word after you enter this gate ; it leads direct into the garden. Keep under the shade of the trees on the walk that you will observe on the right hand. At the end of it turn into the little path which passes close to a fountain, and then go straight to a low-arched door which you will see in the tower. I will enter the house by the usual way, and will lose not a moment in coming to you, and at once admit you into my study, where no one intrudes.”

The unknown lady strictly obeyed my instructions, and about eight o'clock in the evening entered the old mansion.

CHAPTER XIX.

"Thy injuries would teach Patience to blaspheme,
Yet still thou art a dove."

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

In the old room which had been appropriated to me as a study, hung with antiquated tapestry and now illumined by a lamp that I had lighted on my return, sat reclining in a chair within a recess, the stranger who had been commended to my protection. During my short absence to seek M. de Ploermel, she had removed the cloak in which she walked from the cave, and had again thrown over her the white veil so as partially to conceal her face and figure.

As I entered I closed the door and said, "This, M. de Ploermel, is the lady who has this night been placed under my care by my friend Mrs. Lower. Before any communication is made to you respecting your own safety—and I conclude it is from this lady you will receive it—I must tell you that she earnestly desired to have some conference with you, at which by her own entreaty, I am to be present. This is all I can say on the subject, for it is all I know."

M. de Ploermel looked surprised; he advanced a few paces and then said,—

"I have not the honour of knowing this lady."

"Not know me!" she exclaimed, rising and coming forward, "Can the injured be so soon forgotten! Henry de Treville," she continued, "look on the features of the unhappy Constance, and in their ruin see your own work."

She threw back her veil and stood quite still, her eye sternly fixed upon him as if she would read his inmost thoughts. He turned deadly pale, and every limb seemed to quiver beneath her indignant glance, but he spoke not a word in reply.

"De Treville," I said, "did I hear aright?"

"Ay! Henry, Count de Treville," she repeated, and again fixing her earnest gaze upon him, she thus with energy resumed her discourse. "Time and change have done much, but they

cannot altogether have so altered me but that some remaining traits must recall to you the features of the unhappy Constance which you once thought fair. Why do you not speak to me? Are you still doubtful?"

Somewhat recovered from his first surprise, he replied with emotion,—

"Know you! Yes! Too well do I know you, too long have I remembered you—the destroyer of my peace, of all my hopes. The woman whom I loved as never man loved before; with an idolatry of affection of which maybe heaven itself was jealous. And how was I requited? With the most cruel falsehood—falsehood that tore my heart with sorrow, and seared my brain almost to madness."

This was spoken so rapidly, with so much passionate feeling, that to interrupt him was impossible. But no sooner had he ended, than she clasped her hands together, looked upward and exclaimed,—

"I am innocent! As there is a God in heaven Who shall one day judge between us, I am innocent of all offence towards you. But you would not see me, would not hear me. You gave me no moment for vindication—none, to disprove the charge so cruelly brought against me by my most prejudiced, most bitter enemy."

"How could I doubt?" he replied. "Was not my own mother your accuser? was she not convinced? did she not—"

"I am innocent," she repeated, interrupting him with strong emphasis. "Innocent of all offence but that of having now sought one in whose bosom neither years of suffering nor of separation have wrought a change towards the wife he abandoned unpitied and unheard—No," she continued, "but for one cause I would have troubled you no more. Had it not been that the hopes of another rest on my claim and now compel me to seek you, to force on you the proof of my injuries, so that in doing justice to me, you may acknowledge the child of our unhappy marriage, and secure to him his claims as your son, and as the heir of an old and honoured line."

"A son!" he exclaimed, "a child of our union! Have I a son?"

"Had you not forsaken his mother even before his birth, you would long ere this have been blessed with the sight of a son, born after you had refused to return to France, refused to give me the power of proving that the charge brought against me

by your mother was prompted by jealousy and resentment alone ; the boy was born under circumstances of unutterable distress."

The Count de Treville (for so must I now call him) seemed greatly shocked at hearing this ; but he spoke only a few incoherent words as she thus continued her melancholy story,—

"The rest will soon be told. Your mother never pardoned our secret marriage, too long unknown to her. In vain had she sought to annul it ; and when I learnt that a plan was formed to force from me my child, I fled to my native land of England. I had but one living friend in that country, and I placed my child with that friend. My sudden disappearance from France caused a report to prevail that I was dead ; I did not contradict it, as I felt assured that your mother, believing I was dead, would take no further steps to seek out my child or to annul the marriage of his parents."

Again the countess paused, but after a short interval she made an effort to speak with a firmer spirit, and thus concluded the narrative of her eventful sufferings,—

"My son committed to the care of my most faithful friend in England, I was for a time compelled to return to France, where I knew I could find shelter in a convent till some better hopes for my child and myself might arise. At length that generous friend learnt that you were at Roseteague. She lost not a moment in conveying this intelligence to me, and advised me at once to come to England. She planned for me an interview with you, when she herself became an object of suspicion to the existing Government. I was compelled to fly for shelter to the only place in which she could trust me for safety. There I learnt your danger, and that a vessel sent to enable you to effect your escape from these perilous shores now lies off the coast to receive you."

Again she paused for a moment, and took from her bosom the packet that had been entrusted to the care of the naval officer I had seen in Parada Cove.

"That vessel," she continued, "brought these papers addressed to you. Had not the purpose of my aged protector, Mrs. Lower, been frustrated, I should have sought you at Roseteague, and there as I presented to you these papers in vindication of the truth of your long deserted wife, I would have knelt at your feet, and have given into your arms your son, the child of Constance, the eldest daughter of the unhappy Treville Crewse."

"Of Treville Crewse !" I exclaimed.

"Ay," she said, "the heir of Treville Crewse."

The count was greatly moved, as with a trembling hand he took the packet from his afflicted wife. I could no longer keep silence.

"Constance," I said, "did I hear aright, the daughter of Treville Crewse? My mother's eldest sister—a sister that for years she has lamented as dead. How will the news that she still exists rejoice her heart! But, oh! madam, why did you so long conceal from my mother that you were alive; in her you would have found a friend."

"I did not know that I had a sister," she replied, "till I learnt the fact on my present return to this country. I was taken from England in my infancy by the Countess de Treville, who was my mother's kinswoman. By her I was told that my father and mother both died in my childhood. I believe she was herself ignorant of such a sister, who must have been born after I was removed by the countess to France."

"I know it was so," I said; "you will find that you have a sister who will most affectionately rejoice to learn that you are living."

"I doubt it not," she replied. "After what you have this evening heard, Mr. Ardenell, I need not tell you wherefore I felt desirous that you, who are so near to me in kindred, should be present when I sought an interview with the Count de Treville in vindication of my honour as his wife."

She wrung my hand affectionately as she said this and burst into tears. I observed the count closely, as he took the packet she had given to him. As if dreading, yet wishing to break the seal (probably fearing to find his own and his mother's condemnation in what it would reveal), he held it for a few minutes in a trembling hand before he attempted to open it.

"Oh! prove but her truth," he said, "and this will give me more than life."

I conclude that some words which met his sight informed him that the old Countess de Treville was dead, as he exclaimed on reading but a few lines of the first paper,—

"The hour that restores to me a wife, deprives me of a mother — my mother is no more. Her confessor has announced to me her death."

He read the paper to an end; it dropped from his hand; for a moment he looked up, as if in thankfulness. In another he clasped Constance in his arms, as, with an emotion he could no longer control, he exclaimed,—

"My wife, my injured wife! Can you forgive me?"

"Forgive you, oh! Treville! how can I but forgive, I who have so much for which to ask to be forgiven? May God bless and comfort you, my husband! But even in this hour, my happiness is incomplete without another is present to share it—we have a son."

The countess looked at me as she spoke these last words. I understood her wishes, though they were not otherwise expressed, and instantly left the room, in order to fulfil them.

CHAPTER XX.

"Will fortune never come with both hands full,
But write her fair words still in foulest letters?"

SHAKESPEARE.

"I part with thee
As wretches that are doubtful of hereafter
Part with their lives, unwilling, loth, and fearful,
And trembling at futurity."

ROWE.

IN a few minutes I returned to the apartment, bringing with me Charles Tregidiar. On entering, the boy showed no surprise, which convinced me he had been somewhat prepared for the present scene by Mrs. Lower, though he probably expected it would have taken place under very different circumstances. Yet he seemed to be much overcome by this sudden summons into the presence of his parents, reconciled as they now were to each other. He threw himself at his father's feet, and begged his blessing.

The count made an effort to recover his composure. "You ask me, my child, for my blessing. Within a few hours I must leave you and these shores, perhaps for ever. That heaven may bless you and your dear mother is my earnest prayer. Time presses; I have already received a warning that I must leave these shores to-night, or I may not hope to escape the toils laid for my destruction." He turned to the countess. "My mind was so confused at the moment, but did you not tell me this boy was the heir to a large inheritance in England?"

"I did," she said, "but time presses; this is no moment for such discussions; and you have done so much to assist the hopes of the Chevalier that unless your escape is now secured you will fall, even as those hopes have fallen. A warrant is out for your detention. Gwendra learned your danger, and apprised Mrs. Lower of it. Many others also are hourly in danger of an arrest. Means have been devised for their safety as well as yours. A vessel waits to convey you from these shores. Eleven o'clock is the first hour when a boat will be able to float over those rocks, which are only covered with water at the flood tide. Gwendra

has arranged all, and the vessel sails the moment you are on board."

The countess then turned to me, and implored me to give what assistance I could to the count in his departure from Roseteague. I offered to conduct him by a path in the woods, where he would not be likely to meet with interruption—a path which led to the beach, whence he might reach Parada Cove in time for the flood tide.

The count thanked me with an earnestness that touched my heart, whilst his wife did so more with tears than words. She expressed a wish to accompany her husband in his enterprise; but he showed how impossible it was she should do so at this crisis, and implored her for the present to return to Mrs. Lower. The unhappy wife yielded a reluctant consent, and seemed deeply distressed at the thoughts of parting from a husband to whom she had only been reunited a few hours.

The boy Charles seeing her distress, begged her to allow him to summon Sabina to their counsels.

His mother gave a willing consent, and with a joy that played on every feature of his youthful face, Charles left the room to execute his purpose. No sooner had he done so than the count told me that Sir Thomas knew well who he was, and that to serve the cause of Prince Charles Edward he had come into Cornwall, but he knew nothing of his (the count's) private affairs, and of course was not acquainted with those of his marriage.

Scarcely had Sabina entered the room, when we were all startled by the distant roll of a drum, that seemed to come from some spot not very far from the house. The countess clasped her hands and stood listening—pale and motionless as a statue—the very image of despair. I was myself alarmed at a sound so unusual, which seemed to indicate the approach of the military at a moment of such vital consequence to the safety of the count. Sabina appeared surprised, and looked anxiously towards him. "The enemy are upon me!" exclaimed the count.

"Save yourself!" cried the countess. "Lose not a moment. Save yourself by flight!"

"But how?" he answered with a perplexed air.

"Leave the house, fly into the woods; here you will be taken," said the countess. "Your only safety is in flight."

"What, rush into the very arms of my enemies! that would be madness," he replied.

"It would indeed," I said. "Let it first be ascertained in what

quarter the danger lies. Charles, you will not be suspected,—go out and learn what there is to fear. I would go myself, but my presence may be necessary to assist the count in case of any sudden surprise. Go—learn what you can—be wary.”

“Do not fear for me,” he replied; “I have no fear.”

So saying, he left the apartment.

I could not, did I attempt it, describe the state in which we all awaited his return. In the countenance of every one on whom I looked, there was a grave and fixed expression, whilst those fears which we all felt, but liked not even to whisper to each other, kept us silent. We listened, and often on the slightest sounds turned to the door, thinking Charles had returned. Some time elapsed before he came; the news he brought was sufficiently alarming. He told us that a party of soldiers was passing by a narrow lane which led into the open road through the domain of Roseteague. But he could learn nothing more than that they were moving towards Parada Cove.

A blank expression, as of hope annihilated, came over the pale features of the anxious countess, whilst a slight hysterical affection seemed to seize upon her; no wonder, for her whole frame had been grievously shaken by the events of the day.

The count remained for a minute silent, and stood with folded arms, as if considering how best to act; till observing the distress of the countess, he came up to her, and with a calm and resolved countenance, as he took her hand, bade her not fear for him, for he was determined—

“Determined for what?” she said. “Oh! I can read your purpose. Determined to meet your fate.”

He still held her hand, and continued to look on her in silence. Charles fixed his eyes on me.

“Is there no way, Mr. Ardenell?” he said; “no way to save my father? Oh! think what can be done!”

“I am thinking how best to act. There is, I believe, yet a way for escape, so as to avoid Parada Rock; that rock is close to the cove, to which it seems these soldiers are marching. There is yet a way. The night is calm, that circumstance is in our favour, for were it stormy, and the waves ran high, it would be impossible to attempt what I am about to propose. Gwendra, or some of his people, must bring round the boat, so as to run her up the creek in the grounds of Roseteague, where at high tide there is water enough to float her safe, without the danger of dashing upon the rocks.”

"But who," said the Count de Treville, "who can inform Gwendra of what has passed?"

"I can!" exclaimed the boy.

"Impossible," I said; "the undertaking is too hazardous, and you do not know Parada Rock, where Gwendra will be on the look-out."

"Not know Parada Rock!" he cried. "I know it well. Sabina and I have been there a thousand times together. Have we not, Sabina?"

"Yes, yes," she replied, interrupting him, "but you must not think of going there now. The soldiers are out, the coast watched; you must not think of anything so hazardous."

"I will myself go in search of Gwendra," I said.

"No, Mr. Ardenell," said the count; "pardon me, I cannot part from you. Not only is your knowledge of the way by which I must this night pass to gain the boat necessary to my safety, but, should we be interrupted, your being so well known here will be my protection. Your presence may save me from detention; or, at least, I shall have a better chance of escape than if I were alone."

"That is true," I said; "I must not leave you. Charles, then must be the bearer of the token to Gwendra."

"No," said the count, "that must not be. Mr. Ardenell," he was pleased to add, "I know you to be a spirited man; I am sure therefore you are a brave one. It is no offence to one of your profession to say I am convinced that you have courage equal to the occasion, and that you will not scruple to exert it in the behalf of an unfortunate kinsman. Go forth with me then at once. In moments of peril the boldest measures are often the safest; for the danger we fear frequently finds us in our flight, when it would retreat from our advance."

"You are right," I said; "the soldiers have to pass the road a long way about. We can go round by the beach and seek Gwendra at Parada Rock. My word for it, a man so used to sudden surprises will find a way to enable you to reach the vessel in safety, before you can be interrupted by the soldiers. And unless some other party of them goes towards the cove by the beach from St. Maws—a thing not improbable—I do not see you have much to fear from those on the higher road. At all events there is no moment to lose, if we are to reach Parada Rock this night in time for the flood tide. Have you arms?"

"Yes, in my chamber; we will not be long in preparation. There are some papers in my possession which, if found when I am gone, would betray to death many gentlemen of the best blood in Cornwall. Not to save my own life would I leave one such paper to fall into the hands of the government. But come with me, and all will soon be despatched."

I followed. Longer time elapsed than I could have wished for the safety of the count in these preparations. So careful was he not to leave undestroyed a single letter that could in any way involve others when he was gone, that not till I had repeatedly reminded him that the success of his own determination to go boldly forth depended on prompt measures would he give over the search and attend to my advice. At length he proceeded to arm himself, and to load his pistols with ball. This done, he spoke. Now, he said, he was ready; he would but bid a hasty farewell to his wife, and then would gladly place himself under my guidance whithersoever I might please to direct his steps.

Before I proceed with this part of my narrative, it is necessary I should pause and give some few particulars, among the occurrences of this night, which were not known to me till some time after, when I received an account of them from the lips of Sabina herself.

It appeared that, immediately after the count had led me to his own chamber, the countess expressed her conviction that her husband would never reach Parada Rock without falling into the hands of the soldiers, and that his only chance for safety was with Gwendra, could he but be warned to bring round the boat, so as to run her into the creek, whence the count could push out to sea, as I had proposed, with the flood-tide, without fear of detection. On hearing this the boy Charles exclaimed,—

"My mother, give me the token! I will take it to Gwendra with the utmost speed. I know Parada Rock well—what harm can the soldiers do to me, even if they should stop me? Give me the token!"

"Your father would never forgive me did I peril your safety, even to secure his."

"There is no cause for fear, and you need not tell him that I am gone to seek Gwendra."

"Oh! if I thought there would be no danger," said the countess, still hesitating.

"There is none, there can be none," he replied, with all the promptitude of a youthful spirit, eager for its object—"Give me, dear mother, give me the token."

"There, my child, then, there it is," and with a trembling hand she took from her bosom the ribbon by which the little golden locket was suspended, and placed it round the neck of her son. "These," she added, "are foolish fears, but I cannot suppress them."

"Danger there is none," said the youth. "Now, dear mother, give me your blessing and I am gone."

The countess clasped him with fervour to her bosom.

"God be with my dear boy, farewell."

Charles waved his hand, and with the words, "Mother, Sabina, farewell," rushed from the apartment.

"In his haste," exclaimed Sabina, "he has forgotten the key of the garden, through which he must pass. I will follow and give it to him. In a few minutes I will return."

She instantly quitted the countess, and speedily joined him, as he reached the garden-gate. The lock, from some cause, opened with difficulty. Whilst Sabina was engaged in the effort to turn the key, Charles said in a hurried voice of strong emotion,—

"Sabina, I would not say so before my mother, lest she should forbid my going; but I cannot conceal it from you. I feel something here" (putting his hand on his bosom) "which bodes but ill to me this night."

"Return, then, for your mother's sake; for my sake, return."

"For your sake, Sabina?" he replied. "Oh! do you feel an interest in my life?—then is it dear to me indeed! For your sake, Sabina, how much could I do, could I suffer?"

The garden-door was now unlocked.

"Farewell!" he said, "and remember, Sabina, let what will happen, the last thought of my heart will be with you."

He kissed her cheek as he spoke, and they mingled their tears in that momentary farewell.

When the count and myself returned to the apartment, the countess was alone. A look of embarrassment, as well as of anxiety, was strongly marked on her expressive features, but even I did not suspect the more immediate cause; for, not finding either Sabina or the boy, I fancied they had perhaps gone to look out and see that all was clear before the count left the house, in the hope to facilitate his escape. It is possi-

ble that the same idea had occurred to the count, for although he conversed apart with the countess for a few minutes, respecting his departure and her following him to France with his son, he did not immediately ask where the boy now was. Repeatedly did he bid an affectionate farewell to his wife.

At length, at the very moment he inquired for his child, before the countess could reply, the door was suddenly opened, and Sabina entered, pale and almost breathless with affright, so that it was some moments before she could find utterance to say,—

“I have been stationed for some minutes at the gate of the French garden ; all escape that way is impossible. I have but this moment seen an armed man—I doubt not a soldier—coming up the pathway leading from the beach. He stole warily under the boughs of the trees, and then stationed himself near the gate. I thought that I heard heavy steps, as if other soldiers were advancing in the same direction, but I dared not stay to be satisfied. I locked the gate, and instantly returned to propose the only way which now remains to give the Count the least chance of escape.”

“What way? Oh! speak it,” said the countess in great agitation.

“It is one that nothing but the extremity of the case should lead me to disclose,” said Sabina, “as it is a secret connected with this old mansion, known but to my father and to myself. But life or death to the count hangs on this hour. Mr. Ardenell,” she continued with much earnestness, “you must go with the count, otherwise, when beyond these walls, he would be lost in the intricacies of the woods at Roseteague ; without you he can do nothing.”

I signified my perfect willingness to do all she required for his preservation.

“Stay but a moment,” she said ; “I will immediately return.” She left the apartment.

In about ten minutes she came back, bearing with her a lighted lamp and some keys.

“Fortunately I knew where my father kept these keys,” said Sabina. “But not an instant must be lost ; your life may be the forfeit of delay.”

The sense of the count’s danger was paramount to all other feelings with the countess, and put to flight those tender adieus which she would otherwise have poured forth on parting

with her husband. A few hurried sentences were all that passed her lips.

Whilst she spoke thus, and the count in silence strained her to his bosom, Sabina, who stood near, said in a distinct voice, but so low that no ear but mine could catch the words,—

“Conduct the count to the creek; the boat will be there, for the token is despatched to Gwendra.”

I made her understand by a look that I would obey her instructions; and desiring us to follow her with as little stir as possible, by a wave of her hand forbidding the countess to accompany us, Sabina led the way, attended by the count and myself.

In profound silence she conducted us into a small apartment, situated next to the library. This I had always considered to be nothing more than a closet or study, where Sir Thomas Joinacre kept the old and less costly books of his collection. We were no sooner in this closet that she softly closed the door, and set down the lamp on a table that stood in it. On the north side were many shelves filled with books.

Sabina instantly busied herself among these shelves in search of the hidden spring of a lock, which gave way very softly to the gentle touch of the hand that understood the secret of its construction. Books and shelves (at least a considerable portion of them) altogether moved silently forward; and now we found that the shelves were affixed to a stout door.

“The passage along which I am now about to take you,” said Sabina, “leads under the King’s Tower.”

“Sabina,” said the count, “there can be no cause why I should now conceal from you the fact that I am no stranger to the passage through which you are about to lead us.”

On hearing this I instantly recalled the meeting of the stranger muffled in a cloak in the woods, and the mysterious appearance of the same individual in the King’s Tower so soon after. All now was perfectly intelligible. Sabina, recovered from her first alarm, evinced a presence of mind and a fearlessness of spirit that gave a determined and impressive character to a countenance which in less trying moments was remarkable for nothing so much as its sweet feminine expression. How often is it seen that circumstances of difficulty and danger make woman a new creature, and call up in her soul, in her deportment, that moral courage which constitutes true heroism in whatever bosom it exists.

We now proceeded, descended a flight of steps within the secret recess to which the door in the closet gave access, and having reached the bottom of these passed through two or three damp and wretched underground apartments, which were contiguous to several large vaults and cellars under the more known and frequented part of the house. Even in this hurried view of the place, I noticed in the first chamber a small iron grating in a narrow window, so artfully constructed that although it afforded both air and light to these dismal regions, it could not possibly be detected from without, as it looked against a dead wall at the back of the wood-house, to which there was no access on the side of the subterranean apartments.

Sabina still went forward with the lamp. After leaving these damp cells we entered a passage, subterranean also, and more than a hundred yards in length. I saw by the rude masonry employed in its construction that it was of a much older date than any part of the mansion, and had most likely originally been formed in connection with some fortified hold on the coast, as far back as the Middle Ages, when the Cornish and the Welsh were frequently at war with the Saxons. Be this as it may, the ancient subterranean passage had not been overlooked on the building of Roseteague, or the advantages that might be derived from it when an unsettled monarchy and frequent civil broils rendered the castles and mansions of landed proprietors scenes of disturbance, warfare, and siege.

We walked rapidly on, and soon found ourselves drawing towards the end of the passage. I fancied I could hear the murmurs of the surge, and conjectured we were not very far from the beach. I asked Sabina if it were so.

"Certainly not very far," she replied ; "but the mouth of this passage opens behind an isolated rock in the thickest part of the woods. What you fancy to be the sounds of the sea, are those of the old trees stirred by the night-breeze ; they grow thick on every side."

We now stood before a small door cased with thickly-set iron-headed nails. Sabina put down the lamp on a stone placed within a small recess in the wall where, on opening the door, the current of air rushing in could not reach so as to extinguish it. A large key was next applied to a massive lock, which turned with difficulty. The door opened on a short continuation of the passage, at the termination of which a small aperture, so

low that no one could pass without stooping, appeared to be cut in the natural rock ; this aperture gave access to the surrounding woods.

A large fragment, or rather an isolated rock, stood fronting that in which was cut the entrance to the subterranean passage. Nothing of the kind could be more complete, or more effectually concealed from all chance of detection. Nature herself seemed to have prepared the spot for the ingenuity of man. A narrow and tangled path led from it, and from this several other paths branched off in various directions through the woods.

Sabina took her leave of us at the door of the passage, and in a few hurried words advised me to take the first path, which turned to the left, from the main path, and led to the Roseteague Ash, a large and celebrated tree on the domain. That tree was not very far from the creek, where she expected Gwendra. and the boat would be in readiness to receive the fugitive in a very short time, probably almost as soon as we could reach the spot.

She then bade us adieu, saying that she must hasten back, as she felt anxious for her father's return home to make known to him the transactions of the evening.

In all things we obeyed her, admiring, even in these hurried moments, the admirable presence of mind she had displayed, the calm and tempered spirit with which, on so sudden an emergency, she had planned, directed, and, indeed, led forth an enterprise to save the life of another, from the very thoughts of which many a female heart would have recoiled.

We soon found ourselves standing without the subterranean retreat, in the midst of the woods of Roseteague.

CHAPTER XXI.

"One woe doth tread upon another's heel,
So fast they follow'd.
O! insupportable! O! heavy hour!
Methinks it should be now a huge eclipse
Of sun and moon; and that the affrighted globe
Should yawn at alteration."

SHAKESPEARE.

As we issued from the subterranean way to enter on a wild and melancholy scene, the darkness was not so great that nothing could be seen, yet the obscurity which enveloped all around us was so deep, it was impossible to do more than distinguish objects in mass, or in their imperfect outline. The moon was in her crescent, and heavy clouds which frequently passed before her, as they slowly floated on, at intervals totally obscured her light; only as they partially unfolded could be descried a portion of the heavenly arch, and here and there a small star that trembled and again disappeared.

But even these glimpses of a pale and imperfect moonlight were of little use to us who had over our heads a multitude of tall trees, with thickly-leaved and interlacing branches. These, as they waved and quivered in the night-breeze, sighed and moaned in dismal cadence, and there was altogether something so awe-imposing in the thoughts of the hazardous attempt we had in view, in the gloom of the hour, and in the fear that amid so many paths we should miss the right and take the wrong, that never till that moment did I feel such a sense of dread hang on my spirits. Every now and then we thought we heard voices amidst the sounds occasioned by the rustling of the leaves and the murmurs of the waves on the sea-shore, which now broke upon our ears, and knew therefore that we drew near to the beach; repeatedly did we pause and listen ere we went on.

I had not forgotten Sabina's instructions, and kept the path she had indicated towards the well-known ash-tree. Yet the obscurity of the hour, the difficulty of the way, rough and

entangled as it was with briars and weeds, compelled us to proceed but slowly. At length we distinctly heard steps and a low hum of voices. I thought of Gwendra. Yet a moment's reflection induced me to believe it could not be Gwendra, as neither the steps nor voices came from the left, and the left was the side from which he must make his approach; the noise seemed to come from the opposite quarter, yet I knew that sounds at night are often deceiving; it was difficult to decide.

At that moment we stood sheltered from observation in the narrow path, amidst overshadowing trees. Through the branches of an old beech that had been partially torn and shattered by lightning, I could, however, see some figures moving with caution, as if on the look-out. In another moment a mass of black clouds, which had before darkened the sky, parted asunder, and left the moon unveiled to give such feeble light as the planet could afford at that hour. Amidst the deep shadows of the trees, though I could not yet distinguish who or what the figures were, in that momentary glimpse of moonlight, I could see the glitter of arms. In another minute, so changeful was the sky, all was again involved in darkness.

The count came close up to my side, and said in a low voice, "Stay here and watch, lest any one should lurk in that path" (pointing to one into which we were about to turn, leading directly to the ash-tree near the creek). "I will go forward and endeavour to learn what it is we have to fear. I do not doubt these are soldiers. Do not you move from this spot."

He parted from me with a hasty step, and as he did so, I saw him draw from under his cloak one of the pistols with which he was armed. How shall I describe what followed? I know not how to make my readers fully comprehend a scene of terror, the particulars of which I could never to this day clearly ascertain, and him who alone could have solved the mystery I never saw again. I can but relate what I myself witnessed, and must leave the rest in the painful obscurity in which it is involved.

I kept my station, as I was desired to do by the count. For some little time all was silent. I then heard confused sounds of voices as in anger and in tumult; there was a rush, as if some one had broken away from his pursuers, and was running down an opposite path towards the beach. It instantly flashed across my mind that the soldiers had attempted to seize the

count, who, in some way or other, had fallen into their hands, and that he was flying from them to save his life. Without a pause, scarcely knowing what I did, for I acted from impulse alone, without time for reflection, I dashed down the nearest path that led in the same direction as that which I fancied had been taken by the fugitive. I soon became entangled in the depths and intricacies of the wood ; till, all at once, I was stopped by the path I was pursuing becoming lost amid briars and underwood, so that it was impossible to proceed.

In this dilemma I turned to retrace my steps. But my knowledge of the woods was rendered almost useless by the intricacy of their paths, amid the duskiness of the night, so that I turned into a wrong track, which, at length, brought me almost close to the sea ; for I could hear the surge beat with great strength upon the shore. The boughs being less thick and entangled over my head, I could see more distinctly than heretofore, by the wan light of the moon, what was around me ; yet notwithstanding this, every now and then those flitting shadows of the clouds threw over every object obscurity and gloom. At this instant, whilst I was congratulating myself on the probability of soon being able to rejoin the count, or to reach the creek before he could meet Gwendra (for I did not doubt Gwendra would be on the look-out to conduct him to the boat in safety), I again heard, very suddenly, sounds at some little distance as of persons in contest, voices high and loud ; some shouting, others swearing, all eager. Here a rush, there a breaking, a crashing, as if some one was pushing his way, amidst the underwood, and through the difficulties of a pathless track. Then two or three dropping shots of musketry, and a trampling of horses, as if some persons galloped at full speed down the narrow way between the sea-beach and the wood. I knew not what to fear, yet at the moment my fears for the count were greater than my hopes.

Surrounded as I was by a thick wood on every side, from the pathway along which I proceeded with rapid steps I could see nothing ; but amidst all the din and confusion of sounds that met my ear, I fancied, whatever might be the cause of the disturbance, the contest itself still lay to the right in the direction of St. Maws, and not to the left or towards Parada Cove. This at length gave me hope that the count would even yet escape his enemies and reach the boat in time for the flood-tide.

I paused for a moment, not knowing which way to turn or what to do for the best. No good, I thought, could be achieved by my rushing headlong from the shelter of the friendly trees; a defenceless man amongst an infuriated soldiery, who, not improbably, if in pursuit of the fugitive amid the obscurity of night would take the first man they saw for him, and would deal with him accordingly. Whilst I yet paused I was awakened from my reverie to a terrible consciousness of the necessity there was for immediate decision and exertion.

All at once I heard sounds of alarm, seemingly very near me, and a voice calling in loud menace on some one to stop. A shot, a scream of agony followed, cries and curses accompanied them, and all again sunk, not into absolute silence, but into a low murmuring of voices, not unlike the murmurs of those waves now rapidly advancing towards the spot where this scene of death had taken place, for death in all probability had occurred to some one. Could it be the count who had fallen—was he killed, or was there yet a chance for help, for life? Could human aid save him?

With great difficulty, forcing my way through brambles and underwood, I reached at last a well-known track within a few yards of the spot whence the shot and the cries had appeared to issue.

As I reached the termination of the path, I paused for a few minutes, under the shelter of a large old tree on the outskirts of the wood, to look round me before I advanced. I could see three men; they were in a stooping position, busied over some one who lay on the ground.

I must here mention that in this part of Roseteague the trees grew almost to the water's edge, leaving at high tide only a narrow causeway barely sufficient for one person on foot or on horseback to pass between the sea and the land. On the upper part of the beach, close to this narrow causeway, which in less than half an hour would be covered with the waves, I saw the men engaged as I have described.

I perceived by a light which was casually turned so as to throw its beams as far as the lower part of the tree under which I stood, that one of the men carried a dark lantern. He turned it again towards himself as he put it down upon the ground. How shall I speak my surprise when by the strong glare of light that flashed on his countenance, I beheld the hard and severe features of Sir Thomas Joinacre. The bold and

weather-beaten front of Gwendra I also descried. But who might be the third man present (still in the attitude of stooping), I could not tell, nor yet did I discern the face of him who lay on the beach. In another minute I was by their side.

Sir Thomas looked up as I approached, but expressed no surprise at seeing me; all his thoughts seemed fixed on the object on the beach. Gwendra looked up also. There was, I thought, an expression of sternness, mingled with indications of strong and suppressed feeling, as he said,—

“A pretty night’s work this, Mr. Ardenell.”

“What has happened?” I exclaimed. “Where is the count?”

“What has happened?” said Gwendra, repeating my question in a tone of peculiar bitterness. “Why, the Evil One is let loose, I think; the count has unwittingly shot the boy.”

“Good Heaven!” I exclaimed, “the boy is his own son!”

“His own son!” said Gwendra in the deepest tones of his deep voice, as an inward shudder seemed to shake his whole frame and to give an expression of horror to his countenance. “His own child! I had rather that I had lost this night ship, cargo—all would I rather had gone to the bottom than this had happened—the poor harmless boy, who came all so innocent with the token.”

I was so much overcome with the horror of the circumstance that I had neither power to speak nor to move for some minutes. I could not understand it—I could not believe it to be true, though there lay the poor boy, dead on the sand.

At length I asked Gwendra how this dreadful thing came to pass.

Before he could reply Sir Thomas exclaimed,—

“We must bury him—we must bury him out of the way, or our lives will not be safe.”

“And the count?” I inquired. “Where is that wretched man?”

“Safe out yonder, popping up and down in the moonlight,” replied Gwendra, pointing to a boat which, as a gleam of the pale moonlight played at that moment in a long ripple on the waves, could be distinctly seen like a dark speck on the waters.

“Is the count then in that boat?” I said.

“Ay, that he is,” answered Gwendra; “and he knows nothing of this disaster. He fell in with the soldiers; escaped, but it seems they followed after him on a wrong course, and at last

went away, yonder, towards St. Maws. Soon after we came up, and when near the count, he at once mistook us for his enemies, and in the rush he made to get down to the water's side, fired! The shot hit with a vengeance. The count escaped to the boat, which was manned with the Jersey man's crew, not with my lads; it was in readiness to take him off to the vessel. He escaped, and left us to find out this night's dreadful mischance; but to think what he will feel should he ever know that he shot his own son!"

"I can imagine nothing more dreadful," I replied.

"Oh! Mr. Ardenell," continued Gwendra, "this is the worst night's work that ever came across me. The loss of the *Nancy*, kegs, and crew, was nothing to it. That was all natural; a gale blowing a vessel on the Manacles is what we must all risk—at least, all that run a cargo in shore on a dark night—for winds and rocks and waves follow their nature. But this! it is cruel, unnatural—the poor boy!"

"We must bury him, I tell you; we must bury him out of sight," said Sir Thomas. "Our lives will not be safe as long as he is above ground."

"Sir Thomas Joinacre," I said, "are you aware of what has this night passed? Have you seen your daughter? Are you aware that this poor boy's mother is at this moment under your roof? Do you know that—"

"I know it all," he said; "I have seen my daughter, and she has told me all."

"What will you do then?" I continued. "How can you break this dreadful news of the poor boy's death to his mother?"

"We must bury him first, I tell you," replied Sir Thomas, who seemed to have little feeling of pity for the circumstances of the lad's death, nor any whatever to spare when his own safety was, as he fancied, endangered. "Mr. Ardenell," he added, as he adjusted his own cloak over the boy, so as to hide the corpse as well as he could,— "Mr. Ardenell, on my return home this night, just after you had left the house, my daughter told me all. I immediately came to seek you, thinking it would be safest for myself, that is, I mean, safest for the count, that he should surrender himself; no overt act of treason having been committed, the government could not have touched his life. Imprisonment for a time would have been all. Having learnt from my daughter by which way you conducted the count, I followed by the subterranean passage. But you were

gone. I endeavoured to trace your steps, but I only came up in time to hear the sounds of tumult on the beach, and to have a brace of balls whiz through the crown of my hat, from the random shot of one of the soldiers. A great mercy I was not killed—a very great mercy. Gwendra, do you and your lad there—he is your son, is he not?—do you take up the body between you. He must not lie here. I will tell you, Mr. Ardenell, what must be done. If we can but manage it, all may yet be well.”

“How well? what is it you mean, Sir Thomas?” I said.

“I will tell you,” he replied. “I have received intelligence from a sure hand that to-morrow the king’s officers will come to search my house, and to take away all our arms. No matter, if they let alone our lives and property. All will go well if the mishap of this night does not mar all.”

“I think, Sir Thomas,” I said, “were I in your place I would be frank with his Majesty’s officers; tell them the simple truth. Tell them that you did give shelter to an unfortunate gentleman, who left your house under an apprehension of an arrest, during your absence. That his son went forth to assist him, and was accidentally shot in a fray on the beach. This would be my course were I in your place.”

“I cannot do it,” said Sir Thomas; “it would be called misprision of treason, furthering the escape of a rebel, of a foreign emissary. Fine and imprisonment would be my recompense; I cannot do it.”

“But the boy,” I said, “Sir Thomas, the boy is dead, and by violent means. The circumstances of his death will be inquired into; they must be accounted for; what way then so easy, so simple as the truth?”

“I cannot,” replied Sir Thomas; “I cannot; the thing is too hazardous. Inquired into, say you? It shall not. No circumstances shall be known. Why, think you if this inquiry were made that I should alone be the sufferer? Gwendra there, Gwendra would come in for his share. I should be obliged to name him. My daughter told me that the lad went to him with the token.”

“Ay, that he did,” said Gwendra; “and with as brave a spirit and as good a hope as ever lad bore.”

“I tell you, Mr. Ardenell,” continued Sir Thomas, “all would out did I follow your counsel. It must not be. You would yourself find a lodgment in Bodmin Gaol; and as for Gwendra,

he would find no mercy in any way. He would be forced out of his place of safety in the cove, as a fox is harried out of his hole."

"I must not lose the cove," said Gwendra; "the snug berth there is my castle in shore. So bear a hand, Bill," he continued, addressing his son, his sense of personal danger overcoming those strong feelings of commiseration which the poor lad's death had so powerfully called forth. "Bear a hand, Bill."

Gwendra and his son raised the body between them. "And now, Sir Thomas," he said, "please to tell me where we must stow the poor lad."

"We must bury him ourselves," replied Sir Thomas; "and do it perhaps this night. I dare not take him openly to my house, nor to a church or churchyard. We should have the whole country up in arms; they would tear us in pieces on a charge of murder. Nothing would persuade the women but that Gwendra and his people, in some smuggling fray, had shot him, and that I had a hand in the foreign emissary's escape."

"Is there nothing decent to put him in?" inquired Gwendra. "No loose boards that we could tack together? I should not like to bury the poor lad in a hole like a dog. And if we did so, he might trouble us, Sir Thomas, or bring ill-luck to my vessel, that has weathered many a rough gale—and all for the lack of a coffin for this poor boy's clay."

"There is no possibility of doing all that would be right in this sad chance," said Sir Thomas. "It would be as much as our lives were worth to get a coffin for one so slain. But I know of something we can easily procure in one of the underground cellars; it will hold the unfortunate boy's remains as well as anything—it is of stone."

"I don't think he will much care about the comfort of it, Sir Thomas," said Gwendra; "only the decency. So go on. This is a pretty night's work for us all!"

Whilst this dialogue was carried on, we proceeded for some way through the wood towards the subterranean entrance to Roseteague House. On the way Gwendra stopped for a moment, and, as he did so, made an inquiry as to where the lad was to be laid in the moulds, as he termed the grave.

"I know a spot," said Sir Thomas Joinacre; "and as soon as you and your son have stowed away the body in the subterranean chamber, you shall go and dig the pit; and to-morrow night come again at midnight, and by the same way we go in,

we will bear out the corpse and bury it. I must not ask Mr. Ardenell to give it a Christian burial."

"No, Sir Thomas," I replied; "I will not deceive you. I cannot answer for my remaining silent in respect to this transaction. I abhor the secrecy which you seem determined to observe. You are about to act contrary to my judgment, not only as to the propriety, but even as to the worldly wisdom of keeping such a matter secret. If I remain silent till I have well weighed the matter in all its consequences, you must expect no other service from me in this most calamitous affair."

"I will not—I do not," replied Sir Thomas. "Yet if you move but foot, tongue, or finger to bring this thing to the knowledge of the government, we are all lost men. I do not know that my life would be worth one farthing more than Gwendra's; and I have this night had a most merciful escape."

"As to the worth of my life," said Gwendra, "I set it at no great price; but my lads would never steer clear of the rocks and the breakers if I foundered. As to you, Sir Thomas, you have a daughter to take care of, and that's something, till she gets settled with a good husband."

Thus spoke Gwendra, with as free an air as if nothing had happened, so soon had his acute sense of sorrow passed away. But this speedy forgetfulness of grief I had before now observed among those who follow a seafaring life. A sailor with the warmest heart in the world, though he sympathizes deeply with the afflictions of his shipmate, retains no sorrow long. Sorrow passes from him like the gale which shakes and tosses his vessel while it lasts; but no sooner has it ceased than she floats over the seas as gallantly as if nothing had ever ruffled her sails, or put her out of her course. Such is a sailor, the creature of vicissitudes; as in his fortunes, so in his feelings.

I need not say what were mine, as I retraced my steps through the wood, following the body of one I had loved, and who had met with so dreadful a fate; one from whom I had parted but an hour before, whilst he was in all the buoyancy of youth, with all its promise of health and life for years to come. His heart affectionate, and his spirit full of fire. And now, within so short a space of time, all was gone! I could not restrain my tears, as I thought of him, and I followed the small retinue which bore along his lifeless body with a sorrow too big for words.

Sir Thomas led the way; we met with no interruption, and

soon passed within the subterranean passage. The corpse was deposited for the night in the largest of the underground apartments. I concluded it had once been used as a bedroom, for amongst the antiquated remains of furniture in the apartment, there was an old pallet bed. On this the body of the unhappy boy was now laid.

This done, Sir Thomas Joinacre spoke apart with Gwendra; with whom, to my extreme surprise, he seemed perfectly, and even familiarly, acquainted. From all I had both seen and heard during the eventful transactions of that day and night I could no longer doubt that Sir Thomas had been deeply engaged in those intrigues which the Pretender had so long carried on in the West; and that Gwendra, shrewd, intelligent, and gaining a livelihood in violation of the laws, was a useful and an active agent for the conveyance both of despatches and emissaries to and from France. What Sir Thomas said to him, as they talked apart, I do not know; but soon after, he conducted Gwendra and his son to the extremity of the subterranean passage, whence they departed.

It struck me that neither the smuggler nor his son seemed unacquainted with the place; nor did they express the least surprise on thus entering the old house, like moles burrowing in the earth. My thoughts and suspicions I kept to myself. Sir Thomas, after turning the key in the massive lock of what might be called his sally-port, rejoined me. I pass over much that was then said, and shall merely state the most important points of his discourse.

After making some slight arrangements for the decent disposal of the body before leaving it for the night, Sir Thomas once more implored me to observe silence (at least for the present) respecting the boy's death. He further said that as Charles Tregidiar could not but be missed in his household and in the neighbourhood, and as it must be made known (even for his, Sir Thomas's, own safety) that the supposed M. de Ploermel had made his escape in consequence of finding a warrant issued for his detention he wished it to be inferred, in fact, understood, that Charles had borne him company in his sudden departure. There would be nothing so surprising in this, as it was well known to all the household that M. de Ploermel had shown great marks of affection towards the lad, and had been particularly kind to him.

Again did I attempt to convince him of the impropriety of

the course he was about to adopt. But he would not hear a word more on the subject. Seeing my efforts were of no avail, for the present I was silent. Sir Thomas then told me that he had directed his daughter to inform such of his household as it was necessary should be made acquainted with the matter that the countess was a friend of the family, who had that night arrived at Roseteague, and would, for some time, be their guest.

In all this I could not but observe how ready was Sir Thomas in all affairs where subterfuge and expedients could be called into play, and in giving to truth a colouring most suited to his purpose. I ventured to ask him in what manner he intended to communicate to the unhappy mother the fact of the son's death. He paused a moment, and then replied he would consult with his daughter what was best to be done. So saying, he led the way, and we both quitted the chamber of death.

CHAPTER XXII.

"Hark! to the hurried question of despair :
Where is my child? An echo answers—where?"

BYRON.

"Like the lily
That once was mistress of the field and flourish'd,
I'll hang my head and perish."

SHAKESPEARE.

It would be impossible for me to convey by description any adequate idea of the distress of Sabina, or of the bereaved mother on this dreadful event. The morning after its occurrence I was informed by Sir Thomas himself that the unhappy countess would not in any way be pacified, unless she might be allowed once more to look on the remains of her son, before they were removed for ever from her sight. Sir Thomas, I found, had concealed both from the wretched mother and his own daughter the manner in which he proposed the interment should be made, merely telling them that in consequence of the danger to which he should be inevitably exposed (probably affecting his life) if the government entered on an investigation of the circumstances which led to the boy's death, the body was to be secretly conveyed away from the house to a distance, under cover of darkness, with the assistance of some persons in whom he could trust. I saw in a moment that Sir Thomas had pictured his own supposed danger in the same exaggerated view as, in fact, he beheld it in his own mind.

"But," I inquired, "does the unhappy countess know that the boy fell by the hand of his own father?"

"No, no," he replied, "not that; she does not know that; she has been told the truth, but not the whole truth. She thinks the lad was accidentally slain in a fray on the beach, when the soldiers were firing random shots, after the count had escaped from their hands. But she will see the body ere it is removed. You must, therefore, go with her. You are more able to talk to her on such an occasion than I am; and,

moreover, you are my chaplain. Here are the keys. Conduct the countess forthwith to the secret chamber; do not let her stay long; and be sure to lock the doors after you as you return from it."

"And did the countess," I inquired, "easily credit your account of this most dreadful event? Did she express no doubts?"

"Did she not see my hat," replied Sir Thomas, "through which the balls whizzed whilst it was on my head, as I pointed out to Sabina my most merciful escape? My daughter was very thankful for the same; truly a great and marvellous mercy. What room then was there for doubt in the matter? I tell you, she herself came to the conclusion, before I could go on with the tale, that her son fell by the balls of those from whose shot I was so mercifully preserved. Mr. Ardenell, the supposition was her own, and was most fortunate. It saved her from the knowledge of a yet more dreadful history, so that I could not find it in my heart to remove the error by telling her the fact. Beware, therefore, what you say to her."

"I will," I replied; "I have no wish she should know the worst."

"Very likely," he replied. "This is indeed a sad affair, an unlucky affair, and one that may be very disastrous to us all. I must go and get all prepared to-night for Gwendra. I hope to get over it well, if we can but keep the thing secret. Farewell."

So saying, he left me.

I had now a most painful duty to perform. I did not, I could not speak either to Sabina or to the countess on first meeting them. I could but wring the hand of either in silence; speech was denied me. The grief of Sabina was great, but what tongue shall speak the sorrows of the mother's heart?

As we entered the chamber of death, they both stopped near the door, which I closed with care, as I had been directed. The body of the deceased lay on a pallet bed, in the secret chamber before mentioned. The bed stood opposite one of those small grated apertures in the wall, through which streamed the light of day, cheerful in its beams even in this desolate cell. Now, alas! they fell on the poor remains of him who could no longer be sensible of their influence.

Sabina looked fixedly at the pallet, where the form of a human being appeared beneath a white sheet which Sir Thomas had himself thrown over it. The countess did not

look at it, but weeping bitterly covered her face with her hands, and then stood for a few minutes with raised eyes, as if engaged in mental prayer to gain strength for the trial she had to encounter. She turned to me, and said in a low voice, "Mr. Ardenell, come with me."

I endeavoured to support her, for she seemed as if scarcely equal to the exertion of moving towards the pallet. Again she stopped—looked at it—tore her arm from mine, and, with a resolution which was wild in its strength, rushed at once to the bed, snatched the coverings from the face, threw herself by the side of the corpse, and, clasping her hands together, exclaimed, "O God, it is my child!" and fell at once upon the body in a strong burst of agony that so shook her whole frame that it seemed as if life itself could not support the shock.

In these moments of unutterable suffering I did not attempt to interrupt the current of her feelings; as well might I have preached to the winds, or bade the waves cease to strive together upon the shores, as endeavoured to afford consolation to a soul thus tossed in the very tempest of its sorrows. Sabina, though weighed down with grief, yet even in these trying moments, evinced the superiority of her nature, her forgetfulness of self, in the commiseration she felt for the woes of another, for a mother bereaved of her only son.

With a great effort of self-command she dried her tears, and although an expression of intense grief overspread her countenance, the more marked from the effort she made to suppress her feelings, she took the countess by the hand, and in the gentlest manner endeavoured to soothe her distress.

"Oh! come away," she said; "do not linger here. Let us seek God in prayer, and leave this scene of death."

It seemed to me that this was the proper moment in which I ought to act. I took, therefore, from under my gown the Book of Common Prayer (I had purposely brought it with me), and, falling on my knees by the side of the bed, commenced reading aloud some of those most sustaining and admirable prayers which our Church has provided for the consolation of the survivors in that most beautiful of all her services—the Burial of the Dead.

As I did so, the countess and Sabina dropped on their knees; the former every now and then repeated a word or two after me with fervour, then drew a deep breath, and sobbed hysterically. At length I arose and implored the countess to suffer me to

conduct her from this scene of anguish. She continued to weep bitterly, though she tried to collect herself, and begged for a few moments' respite.

"I do not wish to add to your distress," I answered; "but it is for your own sake, for Sabina's, that I would wish to lead you from this chamber of death, to seek Him to whom all live, and in whose kingdom the righteous, the innocent are at peace."

The countess stooped down, parted with her hands the locks of golden hair that hung over the pale forehead of her son, and gazed fixedly on his calm features, whose beauty, as it is sometimes seen in death, seemed almost angelical.

Sabina, dismayed at the state of the countess, and the sight of her terrible grief, felt her own gentler sorrows subdued, as if they were overpowered with a sense of fear, awe, and alarm; just as the shock of an earthquake makes the fears of the storm that preceded it sink into insignificance in comparison with its own greater horrors.

Again and again did I implore the countess to leave the chamber of misery. But not till she had kissed the cold lips of the corpse a thousand times, and gazed till her aching sight seemed incapable of vision, could I prevail with her to suffer me to lead her from the bed of death.

At length she turned to take a long and last embrace of the remains of her beloved son, and ejaculating the words, "O Heaven, have mercy on me!" she looked wildly at me, seized my arm for support, and without uttering another word hurried from the apartment.

CHAPTER XXIII.

"When sorrows come, they come not single spies,
But in battalions.
There's nothing in this world can make me joy:
Life is as tedious as a twice-told tale,
Vexing the dull ear of a drowsy man."

SHAKESPEARE.

SABINA, whose sense of sorrow seemed suspended by her active cares for the preservation of the countess, called in medical aid without delay. An old Jacobite doctor of some skill, who could be trusted (and who, in fact, had helped many of his party in time of need), was now partially made acquainted with the circumstances of the case. Sir Thomas Joinacre told the tale, and told it after his own fashion. He stated that the boy's father, in retreating from Roseteague to pass over seas to join Prince Charles Edward at St. Germain's, encountered some of the soldiery on the beach; that he escaped from their hands, whilst the unfortunate youth, in the darkness of the night, had been severely wounded, and the lady now so alarmingly ill was the boy's mother.

The doctor heard all this with due attention, and nodded his head with a look of intelligence at the close of every sentence, and, as he asked no questions, Sir Thomas was spared giving any further account, or any explanations. From a few words that the doctor let drop, he seemed to have adopted the belief, much to Sir Thomas's satisfaction, that the boy had escaped with his father over seas. He lost no time in visiting his patient, and assured Sabina that he would do all he could, but the fever ran so high he did not think the unhappy lady had the slightest chance of recovery.

In the evening, on retiring to my own chamber, I pondered deeply on these fearful events that within the last twenty-four hours had changed the face of all things at Roseteague, now become a house of mourning indeed. I then recollected the day of the month; it was the 25th of September, the anniversary not only of my own father's death, but that of my first patron

in the Church also—good old Mr. Manaton. Need I add that my feelings led me on to the remembrance of his daughter and all the circumstances connected with my most inauspicious love? And then the thoughts of where she could now be, that I had learnt no tidings of her, crowded themselves on my mind with intense anxiety.

“What a day of distress has this been!” thought I; “what an anniversary of melancholy events! How singular is the coincidence!”

In chance I do not believe; no doubt there is order even in the most seeming irregularity. May it not be that God, the more to impress on us that He is the Supreme Governor of the world, and that no event of our lives can happen without His Providence, renders it apparent by the recurrence of extraordinary circumstances, either for good or evil, at particular times and seasons?—thus, as it were, condescending to our weakness, and giving us some knowledge of those ways of infinite wisdom, which, though frequently obscure to us, like the stars of heaven when environed with clouds, are in themselves all light.

With reflections such as these I endeavoured to calm my perturbed mind, and to shake off the dark and despondent feeling which seemed to depress my spirits to a degree I had never before known.

I arose from my seat, and stirred the fire, which, more for company than warmth, I had caused to be lighted in my chamber, and stirred it into a flame; and then I tried to divert my thoughts by reading some portion of Holy Writ.

But I could not compose my mind to my duty; my fancy would wander; and I sat musing, looking at the dying embers on the hearth, and thinking, as their sparks of light disappeared, how like to them was the extinction of all human hopes, when a low and cautious knock on my chamber-door aroused me. I opened it and started back, as the figure of old Sir Thomas Joinacre stood before me.

Till that moment I had forgotten this was the night on which he proposed, with the assistance of Gwendra and his son, to remove the body of the unhappy boy for secret interment in some unhallowed spot.

I cannot tell how it was, but as I looked on old Sir Thomas, and saw by his dress and the dark lantern he carried under his cloak that he was about to sally forth on this unwarrantable

act, I shuddered. He was wrapped in a large cloak, and wore the hat, put on in haste, through which the balls had made a gap on the previous night; and as his eye glanced cautiously round the room ere he spoke, he looked pale with fear, and shook in every limb, as if the business on which he was bound had unhinged every nerve in his frame at the very moment when their utmost firmness was required for the execution of his purpose.

"I am come, Mr. Ardenell," he said, "come to ask you, though as my chaplain I think I should be authorized did I say to order you; but I am come to ask you to go with us on this melancholy affair. You know what I mean. For on second thoughts I think that as the boy was of the Church, the Church service ought to be read over him, or—or he may not rest quiet in his grave," added Sir Thomas, looking terrified at the fears his own imagination had conjured up, and afraid to speak them above his breath. "Come and say a few words over him ere the earth is thrown upon him, and I will take care to show myself grateful. I think also it will be safest to have some respectable person beside myself present, as a partner in the act, for Gwendra, you know, is no very reputable witness, and could not be produced to prove the boy had no hurt by our means. Come with me, Mr. Ardenell; I will not be ungrateful."

He looked at me askance from out of the corners of his eyes as he said this, as if he thought to read in my countenance whether I was likely to be tempted or not by his professions of liberality.

"Come," he added, in a wheedling tone; "I know you have a kind heart and fear nothing. Here's your prayer-book on the table, and here's your hat. Come along, and I'll hold the lantern to you as you read, and then we will cover up the grave close with the earth."

"Cover up the grave close with the earth!" said I. "Have you then already laid the poor boy in it in this fashion?"

Sir Thomas nodded twice, as much as to say the thing is done, and well done.

"And the coroner not acquainted with his death!" I exclaimed. "And how, where did you procure a coffin?"

"How! where!" he replied; "do not you trouble yourself or me with asking questions, but go with me at once, and the matter will soon be ended."

"I cannot," I said; "indeed I cannot. I neither can nor

will authorize by my presence such a manner of burial. Unknown, unsanctioned by law, without inquiry, secret, in the dead of night! It is all bad, contrary to my notions of what is right, and such as no danger, no emergency can, in my opinion, warrant. The ground also is unconsecrated, and over such a grave I, as a clergyman of the Church of England, cannot perform the funeral service."

"You will not go with me, then?" he said.

"Indeed, Sir Thomas," I replied, "indeed I cannot."

"Well, then, I must go alone," he said; "Gwendra and his son are waiting for me at the grave. But before I go, here is something for you—a letter. It came this morning, but from the state of my household and the illness of the countess it was forgotten. You have to thank me for it now."

"I do thank you for it, Sir Thomas," I said, for I saw by the first glance it was the writing of my mother.

Sir Thomas bade me good-night, advanced to the door, put his hand on the lock, and once more looked back. At last he said,—

"You will not go with me, then?"

I firmly replied that I would not, and added that unless Sir Thomas should think fit in a very short time—when there could be no fear by doing so of calling upon himself the suspicions of the government—to make known the boy's death and the manner of it to some one of the magistrates in the neighbourhood, I should feel myself under the necessity of communicating to the coroner the whole transaction and its tragical conclusion.

"And where," I asked, "where have you made this unconsecrated grave?"

"Ask the foul fiend who seems this night to have possessed you with obstinacy," he replied angrily, as he scowled on me a parting look of most ominous displeasure; "I will tell you no more."

So saying he closed the door, and retreated with a wary step, leaving my part of the house by a flight of stairs used only for the purpose of coming to my closet. I listened, and, as I heard the door open and then shut in the King's Tower, I felt assured that Sir Thomas was about to pass through the French garden, of which he had the key.

"That man," thought I, "was formed for works of subterfuge and secrecy."

I now turned to the letter, took it up, looked at the handwriting, the seal, and satisfied myself that it was from my mother. Though I had expected a letter from her for many weeks with the utmost anxiety, now that it was come and actually in my possession I delayed for a moment or two to break the seal, fearing, after so long a silence, what might be the nature of its contents; and conscious that after an intermission in the correspondence of one near and dear to me something unexpected, and generally of a disastrous kind, was likely to form a part of the next communication. Such is the chequer-work of this ever-varying world. I at length broke the seal and read as follows :—

“DEAR SON FRANCIS,—It is with much concern that I hear by Edward Jones, the Welsh pedlar who comes to us every year, that in his rounds only four days since in your village he learnt there was great dissatisfaction in your part of Cornwall. The military, he said, were stationed at Pendennis and St. Maws, and many reputable gentlemen were under suspicion and arrest, so that both soldiers and magistrates had enough to do.

“It is the same with us at Launceston. Sir John Poldew has had his house searched, his papers and arms seized, and people say that Sir John himself would have been taken away to the Tower of London if the officer charged with making the search had not had a liking for Miss Poldew, who is a very pretty young gentlewoman. Mrs. Trewince is in trouble also; heavily fined for having in her possession a portrait of the Pretender. I saw the picture at the house of Mr. Penlaw, the attorney, who keeps it as evidence in the case. Poor Mrs. Trewince! She is a devout Jacobite, being a Scotch lady by birth, and makes herself miserable till the Pretender has his own again. Poor, misguided woman! I pity her and all those who don't know the blessing of a Protestant king and a Protestant Church.

“I hope, my dear Francis, that you are in none of these troubles at Roseteague, and I beg you to write soon, for though no news, as the old saying goes, is good news, I am somewhat uneasy at your silence.

“I have only one thing more to say, and that I have left to the last, because I fear it will grieve you. As you so earnestly desired, I wrote to my cousin the optician, and begged him to make the inquiry you so much wished about a certain person.

It was not till very lately he could gain any information, and then it was by mere chance he learnt from a young midshipman, who came about a spy-glass, that Miss Maria Manaton, who lived as a lady's companion with the kindest of friends, not very long ago was married to one of the family, a Captain Thompson, of the Royal Navy. So ends, my dear Frank, your hopes of one whom I well know you loved dearly. Now you see my Christian prudence in persuading you not to let Miss Maria know of your secret passion for her before she went to London ; for, had you been so premature as to disclose it, most probably, as I am certain she liked you very well, this marriage had never taken place, and it would have been a sad thing to have been the means that the poor penniless orphan lost so desirable a settlement in life, and that she is well provided for must be a great consolation to you for her loss, as it is to me.

"But you, my dear Frank, are a clergyman, and ought to preach to me, not I to you. I know you will give a tear to the loss of Maria ; I did so myself for your sake. But remember that the Lord gives and He takes. And that He may give you the comfort of a good wife in His own good time is the daily prayer of, my dear Frank, your very loving mother till death,

"ANN ARDENELL."

I will not attempt to say what were my feelings on reading this letter. I was inexpressibly shocked on learning that Maria (whom I had so long loved) was lost to my hopes for ever,—Maria, the wife of another ! My mother's hint about her feelings for me added gall to bitterness. But my poor mother had no idea of the torture she inflicted on me by such a letter. She was of that calm, happy nature, with all her thoughts and feelings regulated by the strictest observance of the duties of religion, that she did not understand how to deal with those more sensitive souls with whom the path of duty, though never trodden in vain, is often the path of sacrifice and of the severest sufferings.

One thing I gained by this stroke of fortune coming upon me at this time of anxiety and sorrow : the impossibility of indulging my own grief. The distress of the countess, the fate of the poor boy, so recent and attended with such painful circumstances, the sufferings of Sabina, and the strange conduct of Sir Thomas, the uncertain position in which he stood with the government, and I with him, as the death of the child of

Constance and the revelations which attended it had brought about a change in my prospects—all pressed upon me at this moment. I was distracted by various and anxious thoughts,—for the time I was overwhelmed by them. Yet I could not but ask myself what was I, that I should be happier in my lot than others far more deserving? In my present distress I felt that I had no right, like a rebellious son, to cry out against Providence for a first bitter affliction, when my cup had hitherto so often overflowed with blessing.

CHAPTER XXIV.

" When fortune means to men most good,
She looks upon them with a threat'ning eye."

" Kneel not to me,
The power that I have o'er you is to spare you ;
The malice towards you to forgive you : live
And deal with others better."


SHAKESPEARE.

ON the morning following the most eventful day I had ever witnessed, Roseteague was visited by the civil authorities, armed with a warrant from the Council of State, and supported by a military commander and several file of soldiers, for the purpose of search and examination ; neither house nor inhabitants were to be spared.

It so chanced that I was acquainted with the commanding officer, and, by the request of Sir Thomas, received him with all due respect to the powers under which he acted. I lost not a moment to inform him that a lady, a friend of the family, was lying, as we apprehended, in a dying state in the house. The medical attendant, happening to arrive at the time I was speaking, fully confirmed my statement, and added that any disturbance in the mansion would not fail to cause her immediate death.

It was fortunate for Sir Thomas that, as these disastrous circumstances had occurred, they did so at a time they could be turned to such good account, for they saved him from any very strict search. The superior officer in command behaved as a gentleman and a man of humanity. He ordered his men to proceed without noise, and to do their duty with as much forbearance as the case would admit.

The captain, after having merely walked through some of the upper apartments, to see that none of the suspected persons were concealed in them, contented himself with seizing all the arms on the premises. Accompanied by Sir Thomas Joinacre he visited the library, where nothing was found that would in any way implicate its master in a charge of disloyalty. No



doubt Sir Thomas had taken especial care that no papers or letters should remain to convict him as a partisan of the Pretender. The civil power had been on this occasion supported by the military, because of the resistance which in more instances than one had been so violently exerted by many of the Jacobites of Cornwall.

Scarcely had the military retreated with the spoils of victory, consisting of about a score of old and disabled guns, fowling-pieces, and pistols, when I received a summons to attend the chamber of the countess, who, it was apprehended, drew near her end. She had repeatedly asked for me.

It appeared that on hearing some stir in the house, and inquiring the cause, the nurse thoughtlessly told her, "The soldiers were come."

Still under the influence of the opiates which, instead of calming her nerves, had increased her delirium, she connected the arrival of these soldiers with the escape of her husband and the death of her son. Again she became so greatly agitated that it produced a return of fever, which speedily terminated her life.

For some time she raved fearfully, calling on the count to save himself by flight, and not to cast her from him, exclaiming that his mother was her enemy, and had deceived him. But soon her thoughts wandered to the sea, to the cove, and to Gwendra coming with the boat; and then she would call for her son, and beg him to return with the token. After a while she looked earnestly at Sabina and myself, as we stood at the bedside, and asked us why we were so pale, and if we thought her son was murdered, if he was really dead, and bade us, if he were alive, not to betray him to Sir Thomas, who would be sure to kill the heir of Treville Crewse.

In this state she remained for some hours, till nature could bear no more. The fever took a turn; she shivered, as if suffering from the bitterest cold, and died whilst searching in her bosom, as if to find the fatal token, saying it would be found in her son's grave, for she had bound it on his neck as a token of death.

I gazed for a few minutes on those pale features, so lately instinct with life, but now for ever fixed and still; and having kissed her cold forehead, and dropped a tear at the loss of one so near to me in blood, I led the weeping Sabina from the chamber of sorrow and death.

I retired to my own apartment, and wrote to my mother, expressing my distress for the loss of Maria, and acquainting her with the remarkable events which had occurred within the last week ; more especially with the discovery of her elder sister, Constance, being alive, and the wife of the Count de Treville ; but, alas ! that I should have to add that, within so brief a space after the discovery, she had ceased to live, and that her death was brought about by a train of calamitous circumstances which (for reasons I would state to her when we met) I could not trust to a letter. I did not, therefore, mention the poor boy, the child of that sister. I confided to her likewise the state of alarm into which Sir Thomas and his family had been thrown by the suspicions of the government, and begged her immediately to come to Roseteague, that she might pay the last sad duty to the memory of her sister. I assured her also that she would meet with affectionate care from Sabina, the daughter of Sir Thomas.

This letter finished, I determined to write another for the satisfaction of my own conscience, let what would be the consequences hereafter. That other letter was to the coroner. Let me say I wrote in terms the most guarded respecting Sir Thomas Joinacre, completely exonerating him as to the calamitous termination of the transaction that I now revealed, but still plainly stating the circumstance of the boy's death, and that fear, lest it should excite the suspicions of the government, had induced Sir Thomas to bury the body in secret, I did not know where. In order to avoid any recurrence to a subject so painful, I will here state that the coroner sent me a courteous but very cautious answer. He was no stranger to any of the circumstances connected with the fatal event. Sir Thomas had been beforehand with me in the communication. I was surprised at this caution. But my wonder ceased when I learnt, though not till many months after, that the coroner was himself as bitter a Jacobite, and was as deep in the Count de Treville's plots, as Sir Thomas ; and now that these plots had failed was not a little afraid of detection. Hence was it that he had been willingly prevailed upon to wink at the whole transaction, and to pass over the boy's death without any public notice.

I made Sir Thomas acquainted with the subject of my letter to my mother, and how anxious I was, for the safety of her journey from Launceston to Roseteague, that she might travel under the care of a trustworthy person. I knew that he would

not let me go at such a crisis, as he considered my presence a sort of protection to his family; and it seemed that the captain in command had answered for my principles of loyalty to the government. But Sir Thomas at once proposed to send Mr. Colin Trewint (only that day returned from Exeter) in his own coach, with four stout horses, his coachman, and post-rider, to bring my mother and sister, with the least possible delay, to Rose-teague. To so trusty and careful a friend did I gladly consent to commit the charge of those so dear to me. On the morning of the fourth day after his departure Mr. Colin Trewint returned with the ladies, having performed the duty of an escort with the most watchful attention. He told me that he had strictly followed my injunctions, not to say a word more to my mother respecting recent events than I had mentioned in my letter; and he gave me to understand that, long-trying and faithful as he had proved in the employ of his master, Sir Thomas had acquainted him with all the circumstances of the late fearful calamity.

From the surprise, the hurry of the journey, and the distressing nature of the communications that I made to her, my mother became so seriously ill that she could not leave her bed to act as chief mourner when, a few days after, the funeral train set forth to follow to their last resting-place the remains of the high-spirited and unfortunate Countess de Treville.

She was buried in the churchyard of Veryan by the desire of her friend Mrs. Lower, who, I may here mention, on account of her age, and nothing being found against her loyalty, was now by the order of the captain in command, released from her military thralldom. Mrs. Lower said that in former years, on visiting Veryan, the countess had expressed a wish, should she die in England, to be buried in that remote and quiet spot. The little Gothic church, its old cross, and its no less ancient and over-arched well of the purest water, the sweet repose of the churchyard, shaded with lofty trees, presented altogether a scene of perfect beauty.

The last exciting events followed hard on each other; a few others, and one of vital interest, which occurred some months after, must bring my adventurous story to a close.

My mother's health was sadly shaken, and she was in so feeble a state that for about a year she remained a guest, sometimes with Mrs. Lower, but principally with us at Roseteague, by the earnest persuasion of Sabina, whose kindness was so un-

ceasing that she loved her as her own child. My sister, too, was no less pleased by finding a friend suited to her taste and age. All these circumstances greatly softened my mother's feelings towards Sir Thomas, and when at length she left us to return to her own home, she bade him a grateful adieu without a shade of prejudice to cloud the sincerity of its expression.

Between Sir Thomas and myself affairs were still unsettled. He knew as well as I did that on the proof of my mother's legitimacy rested her son's claim to be admitted as heir-at-law to Treville Crewse ; and the loss of the register of the marriage seemed to render proof hopeless. Yet for the sake of my mother and sister, as well as for my own, I would not despair.

The reader is aware that some time before I had determined to quit Roseteague, and on my now communicating with Sir Thomas respecting this, again and again did he entreat me to remain, and acknowledged that at the present crisis there were strong and good reasons for his urging me to do so. My known principles and loyalty to the house of Hanover, my personal friendship with the captain then the chief in command at Pendennis and St. Maws, were altogether such guarantees of protection for his family that he feared to lose me. His daughter, coming into the library as he was urging upon me these considerations, joined her entreaties to those of her father with so much sweetness that I found it impossible to refuse.

During my mother's stay at Roseteague Sabina and myself had been as before thrown constantly together. Although I had been silent on a subject of so much delicacy, she knew that I was not ignorant of the youthful attachment that the poor boy Charles had formed for her, and that she was not altogether insensible to his affection. My sister, I found, had told her the story of my love for Maria, and I did not conceal from her that I had felt severely its disappointment. I might almost say that we indulged our melancholy regrets together. Certain am I, that whenever I felt more than usually depressed, my feet, as it were, mechanically led me to her to pour out into her sympathizing bosom the cares that oppressed my own, till at length. I began to feel unhappy without her.

I will not dwell on the gentle progress of a growing affection. Seeing daily the kindly attentions she paid to my invalid mother, and the goodness of her nature, which added so great a charm to her beauty, it was impossible to look on such per-

fections with indifference. I felt that in having consented to remain to oblige Sir Thomas, I had really obliged myself, though in opposition to my previous more deliberate resolves.

Not many weeks after, happening to be in the library with Sir Thomas, we heard the wheels of a coach in the courtyard. He went to the window to see whom that vehicle had brought to his house, and in a tone of surprise announced the arrival of old Mrs. Lower at Roseteague.

"What!" he exclaimed, "Mrs. Lower, who, they say, from infirmity never leaves her home? And who is that man she brings with her? Surely it is Gwendra?"

He looked again.

"It is Gwendra. What can she mean by bringing so suspicious a character to my house, and in these times of jealous suspicion? Do, Mr. Ardenell, go and help the old lady, and bring her to my library; but, prithee, let not that man come in with her here."

I hastened to do as requested, but, before I could offer my assistance, Sabina, who had seen her coming, gave her the support of an arm, and conducted her to the library door; as she said that her visit was for Sir Thomas, Sabina retired.

Mrs. Lower was in deep mourning for the deceased countess. She did not seem to be infirm, for though she held a staff in her hand, she did not appear to rest upon it, but walked upright with a slow and steady step. In her venerable countenance there was an expression of a serious rather than of a sorrowing nature; and as she gave me her hand, she looked at me with that placid smile which I had before observed when she was about to do or to say something that flowed from the benevolence of her heart.

Sir Thomas received her with marked attention, handed her to an easy-chair, took her staff from her, and, with much formal courtesy, asked her what had procured him the honour of a visit from a lady so highly respected, and whom he had not seen in his house for so very long a time.

Mrs. Lower thanked him, and said,—

"Alas! Sir Thomas, it is no common matter, be assured, that brings me here. Sad have been the scenes that have passed since I was last at Roseteague. Oh! Sir Thomas, I have heard much and I know more. Be not alarmed at my saying this; you have nothing to fear from me. You know my loyalty to the house of Stuart, and you know likewise what were my

feelings for the late Countess de Treville, and wherefore I placed that sweet youth, her son, under your care as your secretary, —all now unavailing."

Her tears that gushed out would not allow her to continue speaking.

I saw that Sir Thomas did not wish her to follow up the subject, and he begged her not to enter upon particulars respecting the past, which could only be productive of painful and useless regret.

"You say truly," she replied ; "I will not. Useless indeed, for who can recall the dead ?—who can undo the fatal doings of one night ? The poor boy ! and his bereaved mother—but they are at peace. It is of the unhappy father that I would speak ; that most wretched man who, as you, Sir Thomas, too well know, in the obscurity of the hour, fired the fatal shot that slew his own son."

"Do you know that circumstance ?" said Sir Thomas, in the surprise of the moment scarcely knowing what he said.

"Ay, Sir Thomas, I do indeed ; but be not alarmed. As I before assured you, there is nothing to be feared from me. I honour you too much for the part you have taken, the risk you have run to serve the house of Stuart ever to utter word that could harm you or yours. And, Sir Thomas, I would have you remember that I am a descendant of the excellent Lady Isabella Lower, who was never a betrayer."

Sir Thomas, though he expressed surprise at her knowing things which he considered as concealed from all but the trusted few, and those who witnessed them, nevertheless said he had full reliance on the prudence as well as the honour of Mrs. Lower.

"I will lack none," she replied, "and in this country it is my belief that only the man who brought me letters from over seas is at all acquainted with the melancholy tidings that they convey, and that I have now to tell you, concerning the Count de Treville."

"The Count de Treville !" I exclaimed ; "oh ! what of him ?"

"That on hearing of the death of his wife in consequence of the shock she received by the loss of her son, the count became an inmate of La Trappe, with the intent to take the vows as a monk of the severest of all the monastic orders."

"Did he know the truth ?" I inquired. "Did that wretched man know that he shot his own son ?"

"I hope not," said Mrs. Lower. "I understood he was told

that the poor youth was killed by a random shot of the soldiers in the fray on the beach."

"I rejoice to hear it," I said, "and hope he may never be undeceived."

"There is no chance of his being so," replied Mrs. Lower, "for the Trappists are allowed no communication with the outer world."

Sir Thomas asked who had been the bearer of the letters by which she had received this intelligence.

"Gwendra was the bearer," she replied. "I may tell you that with that letter he received his last orders from St. Germain; he is no longer an agent for the hopeless Stuarts or their ruined cause. He is also about to leave these parts, for it seems that the revenue men have discovered the retreat in the cove, and the trick the smugglers practised to frighten the country people about the supernatural boat and her crew. But before this, Gwendra told me that he had resolved to renounce the dreadful contraband trade, and to earn his bread by honest means. I have given him assistance to hold to that honest purpose, thereby imitating my honoured ancestress, the Lady Isabella Lower, who never turned aside from a repentant offender; she never quenched the smoking flax."

As she said this, Mrs. Lower rose from her seat. Sir Thomas fancied she was about to leave, and offered her his arm.

"No, Sir Thomas, not yet," she said. "I must now address myself to Mr. Ardenell. I must say with Portia in my favourite poet, 'Tarry a little, there is something yet.'"

Without uttering another word she walked directly to the room door, opened it, and called aloud,—*"Gwendra!"*

He instantly obeyed the summons, and stood erect and bold before the amazed eyes of Sir Thomas Joinacre, to whom he civilly bowed, and hoped his honour was in good health.

"Now, Gwendra, speak," said Mrs. Lower, "and speak fearlessly."

"My tale is soon told," replied Gwendra. "I am glad, Mr. Ardenell, there is something that I can do to serve you before I depart these shores, for I have always had a liking for you."

"Serve me!" I exclaimed; "how serve me?"

"I can do so," he answered with energy. "For though for so many years I have followed what you told me was an unlawful calling, you must not think that all those who are of the free trade are altogether dishonest in other matters. I have detected

a sad wickedness in a couple of my lads, who it seems, on the promise of a reward—the sum it was to be, however, was not settled beforehand—from a rascally lawyer, cut out a leaf from a register-book, for which, as I find by an advertisement in the papers, your man-at-law offers a reward. It would be no good to tell you all particulars, but here is the upshot how I found out the business. I learnt from one of the lads, who has confessed to me the old story, that some dispute arose about the money to be paid for the theft, and in order to drive the rascal lawyer to give a higher sum the lads kept back the leaf. Before the thing could be settled, the revenue men were after the boys. They were obliged to make off in a boat that was away for Jersey. But they left behind them a box that had in it what I shall have something to say about presently, and one of the lads—not the worse of the two—that I had taken up when his father was killed in a fray, took shame to himself and wrote and told me all.”

“Did he say where the leaf was?” I exclaimed.

“Please to hear me out,” said Gwendra. “I had lost some small matters of my own, and fancied they might have been stolen by the worst of these lads, so I broke open the box. I did not find my own, but you know the saying, ‘It’s an ill wind that blows nobody any good;’ I found what I now put into your hands, Mr. Ardenell, the leaf from the register-book that tells about the marriage of Treville Crewse. Much good may it do you.”

Need I tell how warmly I thanked Gwendra, as he placed it in my hands, and referred him to my worthy friend and attorney to receive the reward?

“No, Mr. Ardenell, I want no reward. I would have brought the paper to you myself, but the redcoats were about here, so I watched till the coast was clear and took it to Mrs. Lower, knowing what a friend she was to you, and that good lady brought me here to-day, that I might relate to you the whole business.”

Again I would have thanked him, but he interrupted me.

“No thanks,” he said, “not a word. I have done but right. I intend to turn over a new leaf myself, and this is the first step to it. You always told me, Mr. Ardenell, that honesty was the best policy, and so it is. I am going to enter the sea service in a regular way as mate of a merchantman bound for New York. I’ve been bad enough in my time, but I’ve preserved the old volume of sermons that you gave me when you boarded at my farm. I never lit my pipe with a single page of them, and I

don't know but I'll give a look into them; and if I prosper, you shall hear of me, for you always told me that I had a soul to save, if I would but think about it, and I say the same to my old patron there. And so wishing you, Sir Thomas, and all of you, health and good luck, I say farewell."

Gwendra departed.

Sir Thomas looked blank with confusion. So surprised and agitated was he, that though he essayed to speak, it was some minutes before he could utter a word. At length, summoning a strong resolution to his aid, he expressed his sense of the conduct of Trewheedle in terms of the highest indignation, and declared his resolution to discard him from his service, after making every possible inquiry respecting the circumstances.

I here pause to say that Sir Thomas did so; and it appeared that the transaction arose solely from the crooked policy of Trewheedle, whose object probably was to give rise to law proceedings of a lengthened character, and to keep in his own hands the entire management of Sir Thomas's affairs. The wily rogue, knowing that ruin must follow this exposure of his character, would not stay to meet it, but decamped, no one knew where; it was reported, to America.

The next step taken by Sir Thomas was one most satisfactory, for he appointed Mr. Colin Trewint, as a reward for his long-tried integrity, the sole agent and manager of his property of every description.

To return from this digression to the library at Roseteague.

Mrs. Lower did not leave with Gwendra; she lingered, and being perfectly well acquainted with all particulars respecting my claims, and the subject of dispute between Sir Thomas and myself, she saw how much we were embarrassed, though by opposite feelings, and, prompted by the benevolence of her heart, she stepped forward to the relief of us both as a peace-maker. She looked at Sir Thomas and saw that he was overwhelmed with confusion; she looked at me and saw that I was perplexed and even distressed by the suddenness of that turn of fortune which brought joy to me and sorrow to another. The good old lady seized my hand, and said with much kindness,—

"Mr. Ardenell, I see how it is; a sense of difficulty, of painful embarrassment, attends all explanations where there is a consciousness that much wrong has been done by the more powerful party, and much must be forgiven by the individual who has been the sufferer. My honoured and learned ancestress,

Lady Isabella Lower, was of opinion that no passage in Shakespeare was finer than the sentiment he so beautifully expresses when he says that kindness is ever nobler than revenge ; and so do I say, in humble accordance with that excellent lady."

Mrs. Lower then led me towards Sir Thomas, and placing my hand in his, looked at him and said,—

"BE JUST!"

She turned to me and said,—

"FORGIVE!"

And then, addressing both, she added,—

"BE RECONCILED!"

There was a pause,—we both remained silent and embarrassed. At that moment the door opened, and the mediating angel, Sabina, came into the library.

"What can you be doing?" she said. "Mrs. Lower must be fatigued and need refreshment; the dinner waits, and I have been expecting you this half-hour. What can have so engaged you to make you forget me and the dinner-bell too?"

"Business, my child," replied Sir Thomas; "business of consequence to this gentleman, that makes him and—ruins me."

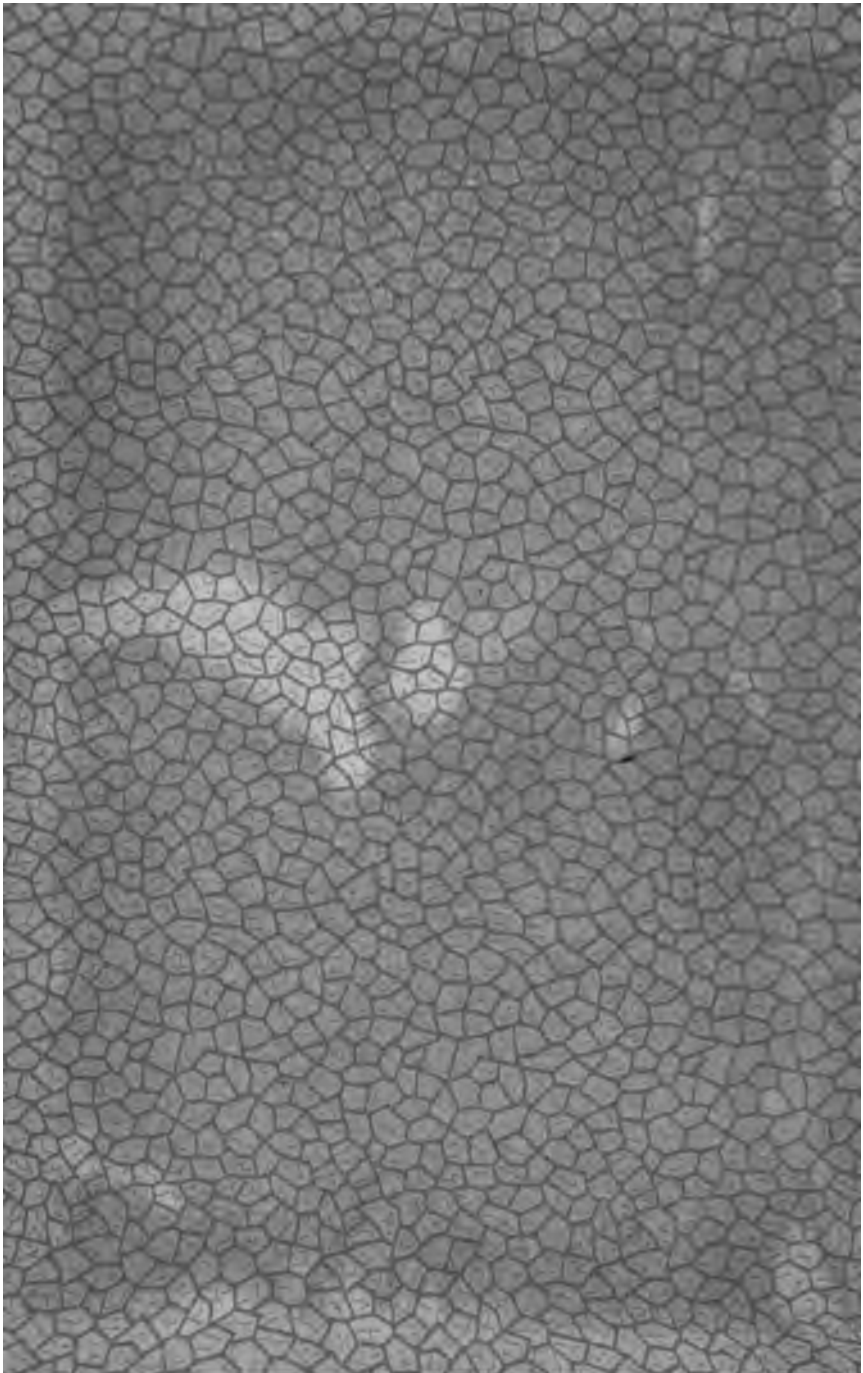
"No, Sir Thomas, not so," I said. "My feelings, I trust, are neither selfish nor merciless, nor too eager for even that which is my own. You shall have no cause to complain of any harsh measures on my part in the settlement of the affairs that are at issue between us. Indeed, my fortune is more in your power than in my own, for without happiness it would be worthless to me, and all my hopes rest here," and as I spoke I took the hand of Sabina. "I think that I can rely upon your consent, Sir Thomas, if you, Sabina, will lead me to hope that you will accept the hand, the heart of Frank Ardenell."

Sabina did not say yes, but she did not say no. Her head drooped, and though a tear was in her eye, the smile that played round her mouth forbade me to think it was the tear of sorrow.

She did not withdraw her hand; and in pressing it to my lips, I told her that she had now indeed made welcome to me the fortune which I ventured to hope to share with her as the heir of Treville Crewse.

THE END.

1



PR 4161 .B57 H3 1884 C.1
Hartland Forest and Roseteague
Stanford University Libraries



3 6105 041 029 005

DATE DUE			

STANFORD UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES
STANFORD, CALIFORNIA 94305-6004

